

5-13-1970

HENRY CARTER STUART: VIRGINIA FARMER - POLITICIAN, 1855-1933

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HENRY CARTER STUART:
VIRGINIA FARMER - POLITICIAN,
1855-1933

by

Sharon Kaye Brown
Class of 1970

Presented to the
Honors Committee
of
Longwood College
Farrville, Virginia

May 6, 1970

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have been of assistance to me in writing this paper. I am indebted to the following individuals: William G. Smith, William A. Stuart II, and Mrs. Harry C. Stuart for the helpful information that they gave me in interviews; also the staffs of Longwood College Library, University of Virginia Library, Virginia State Library, and the Virginia Historical Society for their assistance in locating materials.

Above all, I am indeed grateful to Richard T. Couture for his guidance, encouragement, and counselorship in the preparation of this paper.

P R E F A C E

Henry Carter Stuart was a prominent farmer and wealthy businessman in Southwestern Virginia. He was a politician in the hard fought "Redeem the Ninth" Congressional election of 1910. And, he was elected, unopposed in both the primary and general elections, to the governorship of Virginia in 1913.

Although he reached the highest political office in the State, Virginia history gives Stuart no more than mere mention. It was because of this lack of recognition that I selected to study Henry Carter Stuart. My purpose was to determine if he had been unfairly accorded the position of relative unimportance, or if Stuart, by virtue of his own action, failed to qualify himself for a place in Virginia history.

Stuart was not the type of person to permit people to know about him or his private and business affairs. His descendents believe that before he died, he destroyed his private letters and papers. Therefore, it was necessary to compile this study through research of his associates, by interviews with his descendents and other people who knew him in the 1920's and 1930's, and through study of the political conditions during the

time that Stuart was active in Virginia politics. The man who has received so little recognition of his political record evidently preferred to leave no record at all.

Therefore, I submit this study of Henry Carter Stuart: Virginia farmer, politician, and incidentally, Governor.

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CHAPTER I

HENRY CARTER STUART: FARMER AND BUSINESSMAN

Youth and Early Manhood

During the reign of James I (1603-1625), the family of Archibald Stuart left Scotland and settled in Ireland.¹ Archibald Stuart was born in Londonderry, Ireland, and in 1726, he, along with hundreds of his countrymen, fled to the English colonies to escape political and religious persecution. He settled in Pennsylvania, and when a general amnesty was granted several years later, Stuart sent for his wife, Janet (Brown) Stuart, and his family. In 1737 or 1738, Archibald Stuart moved his family to Augusta County, Virginia.²

¹The Stuarts of Virginia trace their family back to Archibald Stuart. The lineal descent does not include the royal House of Stuart of Scotland.

²Archibald Stuart and his family were a part of the Scots-Irish and German movement to the Valley of Virginia in the eighteenth century. The governments of Great Britain and Virginia encouraged the peopling of the Valley by a system of land grants to the immigrants. For a more detailed discussion of the settling of the Valley, see William E. Hemphill and others, Cavalier Commonwealth. History and Government of Virginia, (New York, 1957), 96-102.

Stuart's son, Alexander, became a large land owner in Augusta County.³ He was a major in the Continental Army. Alexander's son, Archibald Stuart, studied law under Thomas Jefferson, and he eventually became a judge in Staunton.⁴ Judge Stuart's sons were Alexander H. H. Stuart, who became a lawyer and landowner in Patrick County, and Archibald Stuart, who was the father of Confederate General James Ewell Brown Stuart. Alexander H. H. Stuart represented his county in the State Constitutional Conventions of 1829 and 1850, and he served in both houses of the Virginia legislature. He was chairman of the famed "Committee of Nine" that proposed a compromise to the Underwood Constitution in

³The men of the Stuart family have always been given the Scottish names of Archibald and Alexander.

⁴"What (George) Wythe had been to Jefferson, Jefferson became to young Stuart; advisor, friend, and revered associate throughout life." See Armistead C. Gordon, "A Historic Virginia Home," Address at the dedication of the Tablet of the Beverly Manor Chapter of the American Revolution, marking the Stuart House in Staunton, Va., on October 30, 1928. (No publisher; bound booklet at Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.) For a short biographical sketch of Archibald Stuart, see Hugh B. Grigsby, The History of the Virginia Federal Convention of 1788, (Richmond, 1891), Vol. II, Chapter I, 9-15.

1868 and 1869.⁵ Archibald Stuart had two sons, James Ewell Brown Stuart⁶, and William A. Stuart, a successful businessman in Southwestern Virginia, who was the father of the future governor of Virginia. It was from this lineage, which was distinguished for its record of public service to the state of Virginia, that Henry Carter Stuart descended.

William A. Stuart first established himself as a merchant in Wytheville. In 1861 he was the co-founder of the Stuart, Buchanan, and Company, which was the lessee of the saltworks in Washington and Smyth Counties. Later Stuart and a business associate, George Palmer, established and operated the Preston Salt Works in Saltville in 1863 and 1864. This company became the most important source of salt for the Confederate Army. Since salt was one of the most vital of war materials, Stuart experienced considerable financial growth.

⁵The "Committee of Nine" was made up of Virginia Conservatives who "proposed to accept Negro suffrage in the hope of eliminating from the Underwood Constitution the clauses denying to former supporters of the Confederacy the right to vote and the right to hold office." See William E. Hemphill and others, Cavalier Commonwealth, (New York, 1957), 352-353. For a biography of Stuart, see Alexander F. Robertson, Alexander H.H. Stuart, 1807-1891, A Biography, (Richmond, 1925).

⁶For a biography of J.E.B. Stuart, see Burke Davis, Jeb Stuart, the Last Cavalier, (New York, 1957).

Stuart married Mary Taylor Carter and built a home called "Loretto" in Wytheville. It was there, on January 18, 1855, that the future governor of Virginia was born. Seven years later, Henry Carter Stuart's mother died in Saltville from a "camp fever" contracted while caring for wounded Confederate soldiers at Emory and Henry College. His father remarried Ellen (Spiller) Brown, and from this marriage, there were four sons and one daughter.⁷

William A. Stuart was "prominently engaged in manufacturing and general business,"⁸ and he soon accumulated a large fortune. He founded Stuart Land and Cattle Company, and he expanded his business interests to include approximately fifty thousand acres of land in Russell, Tazewell, Washington, and Smyth Counties. During the 1880's Stuart Land and Cattle Company owned what was then said to be "the most valuable herd of registered shorthorn cattle in the world, and many of their animals were bought and sold for fabulous prices. They shipped many registered

⁷Information on the Stuart lineage was found in Henry Carter Stuart, "Stuarts of Virginia: Geneological Tables," 1932; additions by Walter Stuart, 1965; unpublished booklet, Russell County Library, Lebanon, Virginia.

⁸Lyon G. Tyler, Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography, (New York, 1915), Vol. VIII, 12.

cattle all over the world and exported thousands to England."⁹ In 1868 Stuart bought the Thomas Hendricks house and estate, and he moved his family to the Elk Garden section of Russell County. It was this farm that would later become the home of his eldest son, Henry Carter Stuart.

William A. Stuart was a diligent and uncompromising father. He introduced his son to life in the country and encouraged him to learn all types of manual farm labor. The younger Stuart was not allowed the luxury of idleness, but he was given regular jobs on the Stuart farms.¹⁰ On one occasion, Henry Carter Stuart was dropping corn on the Elk Garden Farm. It was a hot day, and the younger Stuart fell over in a corner of the field and told his father that he could not finish the job. His father looked down, and said, "Sir, get up," and the future governor continued to drop his corn.¹¹

Henry Carter Stuart received his early education

⁹Goodridge Smith, Synth County History and Traditions, (Kingsport, Tennessee, 1932), 196.

¹⁰The Stuart Land and Cattle Company was made up of several separate farms: Elk Garden Farm, Rich Mountain Farm, Rosedale Farm, and Clifton Farm. The Stuarts referred to them in this manner.

¹¹George W. Settle, "History of Elk Garden," 1962; unpublished paper, Russell County Library, Lebanon, Virginia.

in private schools in Smyth and Wythe Counties. In later years he often remarked that as a child he had a difficult time learning.¹² Stuart entered Emory and Henry College¹³ in 1871, and was graduated in 1874 with an A. B. degree. He attended the University of Virginia Law School from 1874 to 1875. When he returned to Russell County, he became an assistant to his father in the Stuart Land and Cattle Company rather than starting a law practice.¹⁴

In the late 1880's William A. Stuart purchased a resort hotel at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. This purchase and the panic of 1893 resulted in indebtedness that threatened to wipe out the Stuart estate. Henry Carter Stuart was thrust into a position of great business responsibility in 1894 when William A. Stuart died. Stuart was forced to sell the stocks and securities of Stuart Land and Cattle Company to a banking firm from New York City, Blair and Company.¹⁵

¹²William G. Smith, interview, August 26, 1969.
Smith is a distant relative and former employee of Stuart.

¹³Emory and Henry College, which is Methodist sponsored, is a small liberal arts college in Washington County.

¹⁴William A. Stuart II, interview, December 29, 1969. Stuart is a nephew of Henry Carter Stuart.

¹⁵William A. Stuart II, interview, December 29, 1969.

Remaining land and businesses were either mortgaged or sold.¹⁶

Blair and Company hired Henry Carter Stuart to manage the Stuart Land and Cattle Company. Stuart was gradually able to put the property back on a paying basis through the resources and capital provided by Blair and Company. In 1899, only five years after the sale of the property, Stuart began to repurchase the various farms that had made up the Stuart estate. With only a few thousand dollars, he bought back part of the land, and he then secured a mortgage on that land in order to get the money to buy back the remainder of the Stuart land.¹⁷ Through small enterprises of his own, Stuart was able to acquire the stocks and securities of Stuart Land and Cattle Company from his financiers in New York. It was a financial struggle that was a crisis in Stuart's early manhood, but by 1905 he had paid off the debts and was the sole owner of the Stuart properties.

¹⁶The salt company was sold to the Mathieson Alkali Works Corporation which has turned the operation into extensive chemical producing plants. For a more detailed account of sale of the Stuart properties, see Goodridge Smith, Symth County History and Traditions, (Kingsport, Tennessee, 1932), 195.

¹⁷John R. McMahon, editor, How These Farmers Succeeded, (New York, 1919), 108. "The author was sent to the farm of Stuart to get the story of the owner from his own mouth."

Southwestern Virginia Farmer

Henry Carter Stuart was first and foremost a farmer. His political career was a mere incidental. In later years Stuart looked back over his accomplishments and said that his greatest honors had come to him as a farmer.¹⁸

Instead of practicing the profession for which he had been educated, Henry Carter Stuart was, as it has been aptly stated, to find "his name and fortune in the sequestered blue grass pastures of Russell County."¹⁹ Stuart loved his land and was determined to be a successful farmer. When asked by a city friend what he was going to do with all the "scenery and fresh air away back there miles from a railroad," Stuart replied that he would "make it the best farm in Virginia, on which to breed the finest cattle the South can produce."²⁰

In the beginning Stuart's farms were not as productive as they should have been. There were few good

¹⁸ Ibid., 108.

¹⁹ William H.T. Squires, Through Centuries Three: A Short History of the People of Virginia, (Portsmouth, Virginia, 1929), 572.

²⁰ John R. McMahon, editor, How These Farmers Succeeded, (New York, 1919), 108-109. This book will henceforth be referred to as McMahon, How These Farmers Succeeded.

roads, the nearest railroad was forty miles away at Glades Spring, and he lacked the immediate capital to invest in modern equipment. There were debts and mortgages to be paid, but Stuart was not a farmer to be defeated. He was a man of great will power and energy. Stuart established his farms first in "diversified farming, with livestock as the foundation, which enabled (him) to master a situation which bore all the brands of discouragement. In the years when the hounds of debt chased the mad wolf almost to (his) door, from the mountains and the valleys came the cattle, the horses, and the hogs to turn the tide to safety."²¹

Stuart's success must be contributed to his business tact and energy. He was a good judge of livestock, and he did a great deal to promote the livestock industry, particularly pure breeds, in Southwestern Virginia. He built up a select herd of pure-bred shorthorn cattle. He imported bulls from the best herds of England and Scotland. It was not long before Stuart's blue-grass fed cattle were bringing top prices in northern and foreign markets. Stuart's "attention was given...to serving the most exclusive markets, and his beef came into such great demand by clubs, hotels, and more distinguished restaurants in

²¹Ibid., 109.

the urban centers of the United States and Europe, that he became known as the largest individual cattle man east of the Mississippi River."²²

Stuart had become so well known as a farmer that Governor James Hoge Tyler (1898-1902) appointed Stuart to the State Board of Agriculture. The demands of his farms and livestock, however, forced Stuart to request that he not be reappointed after serving a one-year term.²³

Improving the breed of livestock in Southwestern Virginia was a project in which Stuart was actively interested. He sold sires from his pure-bred herds to the owners of grade or scrub cattle. Stuart stated that he did not try to make money from his herd of pure-bred shorthorns. "I sold the bulls for so little that breeders thought I was lacking in business judgment. But I knew what this region needed and...I have continued to sell bulls in that way, till now there are no finer herds of breeding grade beef cattle in

²²Robert Glass and Carter Glass, Jr., History of Virginia Democracy, (Springfield, Illinois, 1937), Vol. I, 309. The biographical sketch of Stuart was written by Alexander Forward, who was Stuart's secretary.

²³Henry Carter Stuart expressed his wish that Governor Tyler not reappoint him in a letter dated January 4, 1899. The letter, which is in the James Hoge Tyler Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, California, was located by correspondence with the curator of manuscripts.

America than right here in these mountains. I have profited from it and so have my neighbors."²⁴

By the time he became active in politics, Stuart had enlarged his land holdings to approximately fifty-five thousand acres, four thousand acres of which he farmed. He had twenty-five thousand acres planted in blue grass, white and red clover, timothy, corn, wheat, and oats in order to provide feed for his large herds of livestock. His herds numbered three to four thousand heads of cattle and about six hundred hogs. The remainder of Stuart's land was heavily timbered, and he gradually converted this into lumber.²⁵

Stuart found it necessary to build up the productivity of his land. He did this by a system of crop rotation and by use of legumes and lime. Stuart stated that he discovered early in his career "that a system of farming that robbed the soil either by indifferent methods of cropping and tillage or by permitting the fertility to wash away was not the kind that would endure or that would make the farmer

²⁴McMahon, How These Farmers Succeeded, 111. Later when Stuart ran for Congress in 1910, many Republican farmers, who had profited from his purebred bulls, supported the Democratic Stuart. They argued that "Stuart's bulls have done more for this district and for Virginia than any man that ever was born."

²⁵Ibid., 113-114. Also, William A. Stuart, interview, December 29, 1969.

prosperous. The first thing I did was to have the soil analyzed by an expert at the state agricultural college."²⁶ Stuart then planted clover and other legumes. He used bone meal and lime, and he set up a three-year rotation system. Since limestone was plentiful on his farms, Stuart built a lime-kiln and bought a crusher to grind up the limestone. He set an example for nearby farmers by making his own land more productive.

Farmers in the southwestern section, as well as throughout the State, began to adopt his methods. It was without debate that Stuart was considered to be the leading progressive farmer of Virginia in the early 1900's.²⁷

Henry Carter Stuart operated his farms under the tenant system. There were approximately one hundred and fifty families who worked his farms. Stuart did

²⁶Ibid., 115-116. Stuart was referring to Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, Va.

²⁷An interesting comparison may be made between Stuart of the twentieth century and John Taylor of Caroline and Edmund Ruffin of the nineteenth century. All three are characterized in the tradition of the Virginia farmer-politician. As farmers they were concerned with improved agricultural methods. Stuart, no doubt, read Ruffin's Southern Planter, and used Ruffin's ideas of crop rotation and of the use of lime to combat acidity in soil. Taylor, Ruffin, and Stuart became involved in public service, but their political careers were mere incidentals when compared to their success as farmers.

not have a problem of labor shortage. The tenant families were generally large; his tenants grew their own labor. One of Stuart's favorite stories was about one of his tenants, and a deal they made. It seems that Stuart told the tenant that if he and his wife would have and rear twenty-one children, Stuart would give him a farm and five hundred dollars. The tenant agreed to the deal, and twenty-one children later, Stuart deeded a farm to the tenant and paid him the five hundred dollars.²⁸

Stuart contracted all the crop production to his tenants. He furnished the land, and the tenants furnished the labor, tools, teams of mules, and seeds. The tenants were paid about fifteen to eighteen dollars an acre for corn, and Stuart allowed them to take one half of the wheat and then sell it to him at a contract price. Stuart paid day wages for cutting weeds, harvesting hay and clover, and other miscellaneous farm chores.²⁹ He paid his tenants in script books which contained coupons that could be spent at the general stores operated by Stuart on the Elk Garden and Rosedale Farms. At the end of the month, the tenant could get cash for any coupons that he had left in his book.³⁰

²⁸William G. Smith, interview, August 26, 1969.

²⁹McMahon, How These Farmers Succeeded, 118.

³⁰William G. Smith, interview, August 26, 1969.

Stuart's farms were almost self-sufficient.³¹ He operated two stores, and he built a mill to grind flour and corn meal. Most of the crops were utilized in some way. Almost all the needs of his tenants were taken care of on the farm. Each tenant family was permitted to have two cows, a flock of poultry, and four hogs. The tenants had good houses and their children had free transportation to the public schools.

Stuart seldom lost a tenant, and when he did, it was generally a case of the tenants saving enough money to buy farms of their own.³²

When Stuart became active in politics and made the Congressional race in 1910, his opponents charged that he mistreated his tenants and did not give them fair deals. The Democratic Party managers asked the tenants to call a meeting and to make a statement in response to the charges. The tenants met and gave out

³¹Stuart's farms were set up on a system that resembled the plantation system of pre-Civil War days. For a more detailed study of the operation of the self-sufficient plantation system, see Ulrich B. Philips, Life and Labor in the Old South, (Boston, 1930), 188-217.

³²McMahon, How These Farmers Succeeded, 119. Also, William G. Smith, interview, August 26, 1969; William A. Stuart II, interview, December 29, 1969; and Mrs. Harry E. Stuart, interview, September 12, 1969. Mrs. Stuart was Stuart's niece by marriage. It is a general consensus of people in Russell County that Stuart's tenants were given fair deals and good treatment.

a statement saying that they expected to cast a unanimous vote for Stuart. The statement, entitled, "What Mr. Stuart's Tenants Say," was circulated throughout the district. It declared: "Mr. Stuart has always threatened his men kindly, and will always help any of us when we get in a hard place. We have always lived well and we are living well."³³

Southwestern Virginia Businessman

Henry Carter Stuart's interests extended beyond the boundaries of his farms. He expanded into timber and coal in Russell, Buchanan, Tazewell, and Wise Counties. Stuart was a businessman looking ahead; he bought up thousands of acres of coal rights for as little as twenty-five to fifty cents an acre. One particular purchase of thirty-one acres in Buchanan County was made with one sorrel mare.³⁴

Eventually Stuart and B. W. Stras of Tazewell County, together with several of their business associates, pooled their coal rights. They chartered the

³³ Lewis P. Summers Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia. Cited in Guy B. Hathorn, "The Political Career of C. Bascom Slemo," (Ph. D. Dissertation, Duke University, 1950), 60.

³⁴ Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Buchanan County, Grundy, Va., Deed Book U, 425. Also, Paul Brown, interview, August 26, 1969. Brown was a business associate of Stuart.

Buckhorn Coal and Iron Improvement Company during the first decade of the 1900's. When the large mining companies began to move into Southwestern Virginia, the Buckhorn Company, of which Stuart was the President, made leases to the coal companies, and collected as much as five to ten cents per ton on mined coal.³⁵

Stuart had become, not only a well-known and respected farmer, but also a wealthy businessman with considerable power and influence. When the Citizens Bank of Lebanon, Virginia, was chartered in 1902, Stuart was among the charter directors. He served as the President until 1907, at which time he resigned when the Russell County Bank and the Citizens Bank merged and started operation as the First National Bank of Lebanon. Again Stuart was among the charter directors, but in 1908 he was replaced on the Board of Directors because "he failed to qualify."³⁶ He was also a director of the State and City Bank and Trust Company of Richmond, and he was a stockholder in various small banks in Southwestern Virginia.³⁷

³⁵William A. Stuart II, interview, Dec. 29, 1969.

³⁶Mrs. Turner A. Gilmer, "History of Russell County Banks," 1966, unpublished paper, Russell County Library, Lebanon, Va. No explanation could be found for Stuart's failure to qualify as a director.

³⁷The American Historical Association, History of Virginia, (New York, 1924), Vol. V, 6.

Stuart was engrossed in the development of Southwestern Virginia. He was actively concerned about the improvement of living standards, and he was equally interested in the education of the children of his tenants. He deeded land on the Belfast Farm for an elementary school that was appropriately called Stuart Institute.³⁸ Stuart played an important part in securing a new ten thousand dollar brick school building on a corner of his Elk Garden Farm. The Elk Garden School operated as an elementary and junior high school until 1916. Due to his efforts, the Elk Garden District had twelve, one to four room schools, as well as one Negro school. Stuart provided Russell County's first school bus, a covered wagon which took about twenty children from the Elk Garden Store to the Elk Garden School. During the days of silent motion pictures, he bought a projector to show movies to the public in the auditorium of the Elk Garden School. Stuart also contributed money to install a furnace in the school.³⁹

Stuart donated large sums of money to area colleges. On one occasion, he gave one hundred thousand

³⁸Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Russell County, Lebanon, Va., Deed Book 41, 332.

³⁹Mrs. George Bundy, "Russell County History--The Schools," 1965, unpublished paper, Russell County Library, Lebanon, Va.

dollars to his alma mater, Emory and Henry College. He also sought out promising young people and lent them the funds to attend college.⁴⁰

His interest in education did not go unnoticed. In 1902 Stuart was named to the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia, and later to the William and Mary College Board of Visitors. He was chairman of the Board of Trustees of Emory and Henry College.⁴¹

The people of the Elk Garden area were among the first people in rural Russell County to have electricity in their homes. In 1916 Appalachian Power Company wanted to build a high voltage line from Saltville to the Clinchfield Coal Mines in the western part of Russell County. The company had to build through fifteen miles of Stuart property, and Stuart consented to the construction only after the company agreed to build a sub-station to supply the Elk Garden area with electricity.⁴²

The first telephones in Russell County connected Stuart's office in Elk Garden with his other farms.

⁴⁰Mrs. Harry C. Stuart, interview, September 12, 1969. The statement is unsupported.

⁴¹William G. Smith, interview, August 26, 1969; also William A. Stuart II, interview, December 29, 1969.

⁴²William G. Smith, interview, August 26, 1969.

At his own expense, Stuart installed three direct telephone lines to the home of Dr. Arch Graham in Belfast. Since Graham was the only doctor in the area at that time, Stuart felt it was necessary to install the telephone lines so that his tenants could have medical attention as quickly as possible.⁴³

Stuart was an active member of the Elk Garden Methodist Church. He was also an ardent supporter of the Belfast Methodist Church. Stuart gave about half of all contributions made to these churches. Any time a special fund was being raised, he matched the amount collected. He was a layman and a member of the Southern Methodist General Conference. Stuart taught the Mens' Bible Class at the Elk Garden Church, where he was a life-long member of the Board of Stewards.

The Elk Garden area was the only district in the county that did not have, nor apparently need, a deputy sheriff. Stuart believed that the money spent in the two churches provided the best law enforcement. He felt that the work of the churches and the ministers prevented would-be hoodlums from destroying the community.⁴⁴

Henry Carter Stuart married his cousin, Margaret Bruce Carter, on February 26, 1896. She was the

⁴³Ibid., Smith interview, Aug. 26, 1969.

⁴⁴Ibid.

daughter of his mother's brother, Charles D. Carter. Stuart was associated with his uncle in the cattle business, and was, therefore, a frequent visitor in the Carter home in Smyth County. A courtship developed and resulted in the marriage. Stuart had only one daughter, Mary Fulton Stuart.⁴⁵

Henry Carter Stuart, as a farmer and a businessman, was indeed a successful man. He inherited an indebted estate and was forced to sell it. He fought a rough farming and financial struggle in order to repurchase the Stuart land and make it a paying property. His success in this struggle did credit to his Scots-Irish ancestry. Once he had securely reestablished the Stuart estate, he spent his time and money on the improvement of his community and county. For this reason, in later years, Stuart was able to joke about his Scots-Irish ancestry. His favorite story involved a visiting minister who remarked to Stuart that he was always glad to visit among the Scots-Irish. "You know, they are a great lot of people; they always keep the Commandments." To this statement Stuart rejoined: "Yes, and most everything else they get their hands on."⁴⁶

⁴⁵The Stuarts are hesitant to discuss this marriage. There is seldom any reference made to Stuart's family. His wife died in Brookline, Massachusetts in 1920. At that time, his daughter moved to Los Angeles, California, where she lived until her death. (Date unknown.) The only time that she returned to the Stuart land in Southwestern Virginia was for the funeral of her father in 1933.

⁴⁶McMahon, How These Farmers Succeeded, 113.

Stuart had a keen sense of humor and a gift of eloquence that enhanced his political career in later years. He was characterized by an indomitable will, great energy, and perseverance. Yet in manner, he was reserved, and in appearance, he was most commanding. He was a big man; in stature, he was over six feet tall, and he weighed about two hundred and fifty pounds. Stuart had a fair complexion and piercing blue eyes that complemented his dominant personality. People readily accepted what he had to say, or they did what he asked them to do. He was an emphatic man who took no nonsense; he was business-like at all times. Stuart, who had a trained mind and rarely forgot anything, felt that it was inexcusable for a man under forty years of age to forget anything. He was such a shrewd trader and businessman that he was regarded as being "hard as nails." He had the ability to put "upstarts" in their places, and that he did quite often.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ When County Judge Raymond J. Boyd was a young lawyer in Lebanon, he encountered Stuart on the street one day. Stuart stopped and shook hands with the hatless young lawyer, and then reprimanded Boyd: "Boy, you think you're a lawyer? Buy a hat and and look dignified!" William G. Smith, interview, Aug. 26, 1969.

The average person found Stuart difficult to understand, but he was respected by the people of the Elk Garden area. Stuart was not the type of person to permit people to know about him or his private and business affairs. He believed that it was not dignified to reveal his life and business to the general public.⁴⁸ Stuart easily associated with the average workers on his farms. He believed that he had never seen any man so ignorant that he could not learn something from him. Stuart listened to his foremen and took their advice when he thought they were right. But he sternly reprimanded them when they were wrong. Stuart was not afraid to express his opinion, and he expected the same from his associates. He continually tested people to see if they were men enough to stand up for what they thought right.

Henry Carter Stuart, as a farmer and a businessman, was a gentleman true to the old school of

⁴⁸The Stuart family states that evidently Stuart destroyed all of his private papers and letters before he died. Even the collection of his executive papers at the Virginia State Library in Richmond, Va., is incomplete. Stuart was so insistent upon privacy that all his phones were on private lines, and he forbid his family to discuss private or business affairs outside of the immediate family.

southern gentlemen.⁴⁹ It was his belief, not only in thought, but in action, that a man had a social obligation to make himself useful in service to his community. Stuart willingly served his community, his county, his state, and his country. But in comparison to his success as a farmer and businessman, his political career was a mere incidental.

⁴⁹For a more concise discussion and definition of "the school of southern gentlemen," see Charles S. Sydnor, Gentlemen Freeholders, Political Practices in Washington's Virginia, (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1952). Also, Marshall W. Fishwick, Virginia Tradition, (Washington, D.C., 1956), Chapter 3, "The Virginia Gentleman."

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF VIRGINIA POLITICS AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, 1890-1914

Stuart's Entrance Into Virginia Politics

Henry Carter Stuart's adult years centered upon an era of Virginia politics that was characterized by a struggle to resurrect and rebuild the old Virginia tradition of Democratic Party control over society and politics. The period was marked by change that returned the Commonwealth to a political and social system as similar in stability and resistance to innovation as any that had existed in pre-Civil War days.¹

Virginia of the 1880's was trying to rid herself of the Readjusters and William Mahone and return the control of the State to the Democratic Party. But even as Mahone was defeated, another force threatened the State.

¹ For a more detailed discussion of Virginia's restoration and the Readjuster Movement, see Allen W. Moger, Virginia, Bourbonism to Byrd, 1870-1925, (Charlottesville, 1968), Chapters I-III. Also, Raymond H. Pulley, Old Virginia Restored. An Interpretation of the Progressive Impulse, 1870-1930, (Charlottesville, 1968), Chapters I-IV; and Jack T. Kirby, Westmoreland Davis, Virginia Planter-Politician, 1859-1942, (Charlottesville, 1968), Chapter III.

This was an agrarian revolt which witnessed the rise of the Populist Party in Virginia.² During the 1870's and 1880's the farmers had attempted to get legislation passed that would limit the abusive powers of big business and the railroads. Since their successes were few and minor, the farmers lost their patience and organized the Farmers' Assembly in 1885, and then joined the National Farmers' Alliance in 1887 to 1891. The Democrats met with Alliance leaders in the summer of 1891 and promised to pass favorable legislation if the Alliance would not run candidates in that fall's election. The bargain was never kept by the Democrats, and the result was the growth of the Populist Party. The party, however, did not gain much success in Virginia, and it did not prove to be a serious threat to the Democratic Party and its attempts to fully reestablish their traditional control over the State.

Virginia at the turn of the century was characterized by her inherent political traditions. Her philosophy adhered to "the belief that only those who possessed some vital stake in society, such as property or a profession, were qualified to take a leading role in politics. The

²For a more concise discussion of the agrarian revolt, see William Hemphill and others, Cavalier Commonwealth, History and Government of Virginia, (New York, 1957), 381-389. Also, Moger, Bourbonism to Byrd, Chapters IV-V.

leadership aristocracy of the State was thus composed of men of property, intellectual ability, and self-assumed virtue."³ It was a matter of accepted practice that "the scions of 'the best families' through a 'Roman sense of civil obligation' would take the leading roles in public affairs."⁴ It naturally followed that "success in Virginia politics came to depend more and more upon local social prominence, education, and proper legal training rather than upon stands taken on issues of national or state import."⁵

It was from a long line of men distinguished for their public service to Virginia that Henry Carter Stuart had descended. True to his inheritance, Stuart, both in thought and in action, felt that he was obligated to serve his community and State. He took "an active interest in public and political affairs, not only as a voter, but as a strong supporter of democratic (sic) purposes, particularly as applied to the problems of the South."⁶

³Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, 3.

⁴George W. Bagby, The Old Virginia Gentlemen and Other Sketches, (New York, 1910), 31. Cited in Pulley, 2.

⁵Allen Moger, "Virginia's Conservative Political Heritage," South Atlantic Quarterly, 50 (July, 1951), 319. Cited in Pulley, 2.

⁶Robert Glass and Carter Glass, Jr., History of Virginia Democracy, (Springfield, Illinois, 1937), Vol. I, 309. This book will henceforth be referred to as Glass, Virginia Democracy.

Stuart's political beliefs fell within the framework of the Democratic Party. There was a disagreement over which faction of the Party Stuart supported. He was identified as a "leading independent Democrat,"⁷ on one hand, while on the other, he was considered to be one of the "stalwart Machine Democrats."⁸ Stuart was also labeled as being independent of the "organization;" he did not participate in the decisions of the "organization," nor did he strongly oppose it. He was thought, however, to be much closer to the "organization" people such as Thomas Martin, and later, Harry Byrd, than to the independent or "anti-organization" people such as Westmoreland Davis, Henry St. George Tucker, and Andrew Jackson Montague.⁹

As a young man, Stuart received public notice for his interest in civic and political affairs. He became well-known, not only by his reputation as a successful farmer, but also as a wealthy businessman. Thus, his wealth and position accorded him considerable power and influence, first in county politics, and later in State political affairs. His local social prominence, education, and legal training

⁷Hemphill, Cavalier Commonwealth, 419. Also, Kirby, Westmoreland Davis, 62.

⁸Alvin L. Hall, "The Prohibition Movement in Virginia, 1826-1916," (Master's Thesis, University of Virginia, 1964), 144. The statement is unsupported.

⁹This opinion of Stuart's political allegiance was expressed by his nephew, William A. Stuart II, interview, December 29, 1969.

made him an advisor and a "behind-the-scenes" political leader in Russell County and in Virginia's Ninth Congressional District. He was active for Democratic nominees for public office, "particularly so in the support of Captain John A. Buchanan in his two successful campaigns for Congress from the Ninth District, and of various candidates who opposed Campbell Slemp and C. Bascom Slemp."¹⁰

Stuart's first active entrance into public service came in June, 1892, when he was a delegate to the National Democratic Convention at Chicago, Illinois. This presidential election year marked the rise of the Populist Party, with James B. Weaver as the party's nominee. The Democratic convention nominated Grover Cleveland. Cleveland's position on the gold standard won him the support of eastern conservative financial and business groups. The silver question, however, disrupted the Democratic Party in Virginia. John W. Daniel, in an appeal for free coinage of silver, led a fight against Cleveland. Other Virginia Democrats, including Stuart, followed the lead of Joseph Byran of the Richmond Times, and backed Cleveland.¹¹

¹⁰ Glass, Virginia Democracy, 309. Buchanan represented the Ninth District in the 1890's. From 1902 until 1922 the district was held by the Republican Slemp Family.

¹¹ For a further discussion of the Populist Party, the Presidential election of 1892, and the gold and silver issue, see Hemphill, Cavalier Commonwealth, 383-386.

Stuart was further recognized in State political circles in 1898 when Governor James Hoge Tyler(1898-1902) appointed him to the State Board of Agriculture. The demands of his farms, however, forced Stuart to request that he not be reappointed after serving only one year.¹²

Rise of the Democratic Party Machine

The early 1890's witnessed the rise of a Democratic Party Machine in Virginia.¹³ The rise of the Machine was centered around two obscure Virginians who came to the political scene and advanced careers for themselves that made them well-known outside of Virginia. These two men, Thomas Martin and Andrew Jackson Montague, and their factional quarrels affected, not only individuals, but also the political control of Virginia. Their disagreements involved elections of governors and legislators to the extent that "Virginia went through an intra-party and inter-party campaign that was to mean much in the history of the State."¹⁴

When the Democrats called their convention for nomination of a candidate for governor in 1893, three party leaders were seeking the nomination. They were the incumbent James Hoge Tyler, Charles T. O'Ferrall, and Major A.S. Buford. A sectional issue was raised when southwestern Democrats

¹² See Chapter I, 10. H.C. Stuart to Gov. James H. Tyler, January 4, 1899. Tyler Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

¹³ For a more concise discussion of the rise of the Machine, see Glass, Virginia Democracy, Chapter XX.

¹⁴ Glass, 260.

said that they were tired of having their candidates "shused--shused". The Populist Party nominated Edmund Randolph Cocke, a grandson of Edmund Randolph who had been Virginia's governor from 1786 to 1788. Since the Republican Party offered no candidates, the contest was between the Populists and Democrats.

The State newspapers became involved in the Democratic Party issues when the Richmond Times and the Dispatch carried editorials asking for election reforms.¹⁵ When the Democratic convention was held, Charles T. O'Ferrall, who was described as a loyal party worker, was the leading candidate. His nomination was made unanimous after the first ballot.¹⁶ To satisfy the demands of the southwestern Democrats, Major Robert Kent of Wythe County was nominated for Lieutenant Governor. The election returns gave the Democrats a secure majority. O'Ferrall was elected by a vote of 127,000 to 87,000 for Cocke.¹⁷

Only a month after this election, Virginia Democratic Party members were surprised by the defeat of former Governor Fitzhugh Lee in a legislative caucus for nomination to the United States Senate. Thomas Martin, an unknown

¹⁵ Ibid., 216.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 262. This vote marked the peak of Populist strength in Virginia. For further discussion of the election of 1892, see Charles E. Wynes, "Charles T. O'Ferrall and the Virginia Gubernatorial Election of 1892," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 64(1956), 437-453.

railroad lawyer from Albemarle County was the surprising choice of the caucus. Martin had been active in party counsels and on State party committees, but he had never held an office, and his chances against the popular Lee had been considered remote. The influential Hal D. Flood was Martin's campaign manager, and when the final vote was taken in the caucus, Martin defeated Lee by a vote of 66 to 55.¹⁸ There were immediate demands for an investigation. Hearings were conducted, but the committee reported that "there had been certain practices and acts which it could not commend, but that they had been without the consent or approbation of any candidate and not different from those resorted to in former campaigns."¹⁹ State newspapers, with the exception of the Richmond Dispatch, were not satisfied to let the issue die. The Lynchburg Advance called for the vindication of Martin; the Richmond Times charged the use of money by railroad interests; and the Norfolk Virginian stated that the election of Martin was "not in accord with the wishes or the expectations of the people."²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid., 263.

¹⁹ Ibid., 264. Questionable campaign practices and the use of money were more or less common and accepted in Virginia elections in the 1890's.

²⁰ Ibid., 264-265. No dates are given for the newspapers. It is interesting to note that one of Lee's campaign managers was Henry Carter Stuart. For a more detailed discussion of Martin's election, see Moger, Bourbonism to Byrd, 113-121.

A serious challenge to Democratic control of Virginia came in 1896. Dissident Democrats, as a result of both Martin's election and the Panic of 1893, refused to support William J. Bryan and the national Democratic platform in that year's presidential election. Although the State stayed in the Democratic column at election time, the money issue remained a topic of disagreement in Virginia's Democratic Party.

J. Taylor Ellyson and James Hoge Tyler were the Democratic candidates for the gubernatorial nomination in 1897. Tyler, who was a farmer from the southwestern section of the State, made industrial development and growth of Virginia and the problem of multiplicity of office holders in State government the chief issues. Since the money issue was played down, Tyler was nominated on the first ballot by acclamation at the Democratic Convention. The Populist Party again nominated Edmund Randolph Cocke, and the Republicans named Patrick McCaull as their standard-bearer. Tyler won an easy victory by a plurality of sixty thousand votes.²¹ Tyler's administration, 1898-1902, marked the beginning of a period of political change in Virginia.

A concerted movement for a State convention to frame a new constitution to replace the Underwood Constitution was started. The question of constitutional revision was first put before the people in 1838, but at that time, neither

²¹ Ibid., 266.

the Democratic Party nor the Republican Party offered any public discussion on the issue.²² The proposal was rejected by a vote of 63,125 to 3,698.²³ William Mahone had not been completely defeated, and the Democrats feared a repeat of the political instability which had marked the State from 1879 to 1883 under the Readjusters. The Richmond Dispatch in that year stated that "we are unable to see any good reason for calling a Constitutional Convention. We fear it."²⁴

²²Article XII of the Underwood Constitution provided that: "At the general election to be held in the year 1888, and in each year thereafter, and also at such time as the general assembly (sic) may provide, the question, 'Shall there be a convention to revise the Constitution and amend the same?' shall be decided by the electors qualified to vote for members of the general assembly; and in case of the electors so qualified voting shall decide in favor of a convention for such purpose, the general assembly at its next session shall provide by law for the election of delegates to such convention." Cited in William C. Pendleton, Political History of Appalachian Virginia, 1776-1927, (Dayton, Va., 1927), 438. Henceforth this book will be referred to as Pendleton, Political History.

²³Glass, Virginia Democracy, 268.

²⁴Richmond Dispatch, Oct. 7, 1888. Cited in Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, 63. See Pulley for a detailed consideration of the growth of the constitutional revision movement, 63-65.

For the next five years the issue was "sporadically" discussed. In 1893 the Richmond Dispatch reversed its stand and attempted to revive interest in the revision issue by "expressing the hope of...correcting the evils of the Underwood Constitution."²⁵ Several other newspapers joined the movement, and in May, 1894, the Culpepper Exponent took the lead in advocating the submission of the proposal to the people again.²⁶ Eugene Massie of Richmond introduced a bill to submit the issue to the people, and it was passed by the General Assembly in May, 1897. Again the proposal was defeated in the general election, but the majority opposed to revision was smaller than it had been in 1888. The reason for the second defeat was attributed "to unsettled political conditions...and to division within the Democracy over the question of disfranchising the Negro."²⁷

The Virginia Democracy stood opposed to reform as long as the possibility existed that another movement similar in aim to that inaugurated by Mahone might appear to cause further damage to the traditionalist order. Moreover, as long as the party was divided by such national questions as the silver controversy and state issues such as disfranchisement, the consolidation of opinion in favor of reform was difficult. By the turn of the century, however, the Democracy had arrived at a working consensus in favor of free silver, constitutional revision and franchise contraction, and the

²⁵Glass, Virginia Democracy, 268.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, 63-64.

party virtually ruled supreme in the political affairs of the state. Employing the expedient of electoral fraud, the Democracy effectively controlled the Negro vote and shattered the Republican party and the Populist movement. After 1891 no Negroes served in the General Assembly, and only a handful of Republicans were left to challenge the overwhelming Democratic majority in the legislature. In short, by 1900 the Democratic party possessed the power to propose a program of disfranchisement and constitutional revision.²⁸

The strict enforcement of the Fifteenth Amendment by the federal government was a "major obstacle" that blocked the revision movement. But in 1898 the United States Supreme Court upheld an "understanding clause" in Mississippi's state constitution, and Virginia, along with other southern states, began serious consideration of constitutional revision.²⁹

The Constitutional Convention, 1901-1902

The independent Democrats formed the leadership in the movement for a new constitution. Although not opposed to revision, the Machine Democrats, under Thomas Martin, were fearful that the issue would divide the Party, create political turmoil, and give the Republicans control of the State.³⁰ But the turn of the century witnessed relative

²⁸ Ibid., 64.

²⁹ Ibid., 69. Also see Hemphill, Cavalier Commonwealth, 411-412. The Supreme Court case was Williams v. Mississippi.

³⁰ Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, 64.

political peace, and under such conditions, a concerted movement for constitutional revision and other reform was possible.

Senator Hal D. Flood introduced to the General Assembly in 1899 a bill that called for a public vote on a new constitution in 1901. Senator Carter Glass, however, offered an amendment fixing the date for May, 1900. The General Assembly adopted the bill on March 5, 1900, despite considerable opposition from Republican leaders and several Democrats who feared the elimination of useless county offices.³¹

The Republicans denounced the Flood-Glass Bill as "a manifest fraud upon its face," and the whole movement for constitutional revision was characterized as an "attempt to institute in the State an oligarchy of office holders which could not be got rid of except by revolution."³² Senator Carter Glass responded to the Republican charges by saying that revision was necessary to "free the State from corrupt, costly, and intolerable domination of an office-holding despotism."³³

The Republican Party, which was fearful of purging of the Negro vote, and consequently the majority of their support, continued to oppose constitutional revision. The

³¹Glass, Virginia Democracy, 269 and 274.

³²Ibid., 274.

³³Ibid., 269. It is not sure to whom Glass was referring. Because of his own independent beliefs, he could have been speaking of the Machine control of the State.

Democrats, however, met in Norfolk on May 2, 1900, and officially endorsed revision with only six dissenting votes.³⁴ Thereby the issue was turned into a party question.

The largest sentiment against revision came from the "white counties," whereas the "black belt counties" strongly approved. The Seventh and Ninth Districts in Southwestern Virginia voiced the most opposition.³⁵ There were few Negroes in the area, but the people feared disfranchisement of many illiterate whites. Both parties conducted intensive "educational campaigns" to bring out the vote. The Democrats tried to dissipate the apprehension of the illiterate whites and its own party members, who wanted assurance that the new constitution would be submitted to the people, by issuing a resolution prepared by Senator Carter Glass to the effect that:

Resolved: that it is the sense of this convention that, in framing a new constitution, no effort should be made to disfranchise any citizen of Virginia who had the right to vote prior to 1861, nor the descendent of any such person; and that it is the sense of this convention that when such constitution shall have been framed it shall be submitted to a vote of the people for ratification or rejection.³⁶

The newspapers of Virginia became actively involved in discussion of constitutional revision and reform. They

³⁴Ibid., 269.

³⁵Ibid., 270.

³⁶Ibid., 275-76.

attacked the Underwood Constitution as "a vile relic" of the Reconstruction era. "Every line and syllable of the Underwood Constitution are repugnant to good public policy, dangerous to the peace of the community and harmful to the pride of the citizen."³⁷ The Richmond Dispatch took the lead in supporting constitutional reform by advancing the belief that the Underwood Constitution had been forced upon Virginia by "one of the vilest and most ruthless gangs of political marauders, corruptionalists, and malignants that ever disgraced a civilized country."³⁸

There was also a "continuous deluge" of racist propoganda. The newspapers pointed out that the enfranchisement of the Negro was "an atrocious blunder and moral crime" because the black man was "totally lacking in the fitness or capacity of self-government."³⁹

Despite the efforts of the Democrats to arouse sentiment in favor of constitutional revision, the vote on May 24, 1900, was small. The referendum passed with only 77,362 votes for and 60,375 votes against revision.⁴⁰

³⁷ Norfolk Virginian-Pilot, April 27, 1900. Cited in Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, 69-70.

³⁸ Richmond Dispatch, May 18, 1900. Cited in Pulley, 70.

³⁹ Charlottesville Progress, May 16, 1900. Cited in Pulley, 71.

⁴⁰ Glass, Virginia Democracy, 270. For an interpretative study of the voting results, see Pulley, 73-78. Also, Pendleton, Political History, 440-43.

As a result of the referendum, Governor James Hoge Tyler called the General Assembly into an extra session. The Assembly passed an act on February 16, 1901, providing for a constitutional convention. Membership, which was apportioned according to representatives in the House of Delegates, was set at one hundred. The election of delegates was held on the fourth Thursday, May, 1901. Finally, the Assembly authorized submission of the new constitution to the vote of the people.⁴¹

The Democratic Party secured eighty-eight of the one hundred seats. All but one of the twelve Republicans came from west of the Blue Ridge. The Republicans attributed their poor showing to "the uniformly fraudulent methods that had prevailed for many years under the conduct of election officers," making it "useless to put up candidates in most counties of the State."⁴² The ablest Democratic leaders were elected to the convention. They included leaders of the State Democratic Party organization such as Senator John Daniel; William Anderson, who was elected Attorney General in 1901; and Congressman Hal D. Flood and Senator Carter Glass. Many were judges and lawyers. Seventeen delegates were farmers, ten were businessmen, two were newspaper editors, two were preachers, and seven others

⁴¹ Glass, Virginia Democracy, 277. Later members of the convention would condemn the final act as an "usurpation of authority."

⁴² Tazewell Republican, Oct. 3, 1901. Cited in Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, 78.

were of miscellaneous occupations.⁴³ The delegates, who were gentlemen of established Virginia families, believed in the principles and traditions of old Virginia. Therefore, they sought the return of control of the State and the elective franchise to the members of the community who had a permanent stake in society.⁴⁴

It was only natural that Henry Carter Stuart was selected as one the Southwestern Virginia's delegates to the constitutional convention. His influence and power as a farmer and businessman, along with the social prominence of his family, marked him as a possible delegate from the early days of the revision movement. His record of loyalty to the Democratic Party, and particularly, his support of Captain John A. Buchanan's campaigns for Congress from the Ninth District, secured a convention seat for Stuart. Although he was well-known in Southwestern Virginia and in State party circles, Stuart was relatively unknown to the majority of Virginians. Stuart's activities in the constitutional convention provided him with stepping stones for public notice and higher political service.

⁴³Ibid., 78-80. For more information concerning the delegates and the composition of the convention of 1901-1902, see Jacob N. Brenaman, A History of Virginia Conventions, (Richmond, 1902), 96-104.

⁴⁴Ibid., 80.

When the convention convened in June, 1901, it was generally accepted that the chief purpose of the meeting was "to amend the suffrage clause of the existing Constitution."⁴⁵ The Democratic caucus nominated John Goode for President of the convention. In his opening speech, Goode expressed the sentiments of Virginia when he stated:

The white people of Virginia have no animosity or prejudice towards the colored race. On the contrary, they entertain for the members of that race the most kindly feelings and desire to help them in every legitimate way, but they believe that the dominant party in congress(sic) not only committed a stupendous blunder, but a great crime against civilization and Christianity, when they turned a deaf ear to the advice of their wisest leaders and required Virginia and other southern states under the rule of the bayonet, to submit to universal negro suffrage.⁴⁶

The delegates realized that the task of revision would be a difficult one; they needed a plan that would disfranchise one hundred and forty thousand Negroes without disfranchising three hundred thousand illiterate whites. The Committee on Elective Franchise, which was chaired by John Daniel, was responsible for framing the suffrage provision. It was not until September, 1901, that the Committee reported two plans to the convention.

⁴⁵ Report of the Proceedings and Debates of the Constitutional Convention...of Virginia, (Richmond, 1906), Vol. I, 14. This book will henceforth be referred to as Proceedings and Debates.

⁴⁶ Glass, Virginia Democracy, 278.

One plan was sponsored by Daniel, the other was supported by Walter Watson and Alfred Thom. The plans were similar in many respects, such as age, residence, and poll tax requirements, but they differed on educational qualifications. Daniel proposed that the voter should be able to read or understand or explain a section of the constitution. Watson and Thom felt that the electors should be able to give "a reasonable explanation of the general nature of the duties of the various officers for whom they may at any time, under the laws then existing be entitled to vote."⁴⁷ There were other small areas of technical disagreement. In the middle of the debate on the plans, Daniel was forced to take leave of absence because of illness, and Carter Glass was drafted to look after Daniel's proposal. A compromise plan was approved in April, 1902, by a vote of 67 to 28.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ibid., 279.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 280. "The compromise established four class of electors: 1) A person who, prior to the adoption of the constitution, had served in time of war in the army or navy of the United States, of the Confederate states, or any state of the Union or the Confederacy; 2) the son of any such person; 3) a person who owns property, upon which for the year next preceding that in which he offers to register, state taxes aggregating at least one dollar have been paid; and 4) a person able to read any section of the constitution submitted to him by the officers of registration and give a reasonable explanation of same; or if unable to read such section, able to understand and give reasonable explanation thereof when read to him by the registration officers."

Henry Carter Stuart was a member of the Suffrage Committee of the convention, and was one of the strong supporters of the "understanding clause." His constituents in Southwestern Virginia, however, feared that any "understanding clause" would disfranchise many illiterate whites. The racial propaganda of Eastern Virginia had little effect on the mountaineers. Since there were so few black men in their section of the State, they regarded the Negro with curiosity rather than animosity. To them the threat to democracy was not the Negro, but the literacy test. Only one voter out of every four could read or write.⁴⁹

In answer to the fears of the people he represented, Stuart addressed a circular letter to his constituents that stated:

The poorest and most uneducated white man can and will vote under the provisions of any of the bills. The clause known as the 'Understanding Clause' has been reported as the only constitutional means yet discovered to include the white man and exclude the undesirable negro. The registration provided for by this clause will be conducted by your neighbors and friends, who believing in white supremacy, see no way of securing it without preserving white suffrage and at the same time curtailing negro suffrage. The Republican leaders know only too well that we are not proposing to disfranchise the white man, and that the blow will fall on the negro, where it is aimed.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Guy B. Hathorn, "The Political Career of C. Bascom Slomp," (Ph. D. Dissertation, Duke University, 1950), 20. Henceforth this paper will be referred to as Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slomp."

⁵⁰ Pendleton, Political History, 461-462

Many reforms and revisions passed through the convention with little or no discussion.⁵¹ There was, however, a heated debate on the establishment of a State Corporation Commission in lieu of the Bureau of Public Works. The farmers won their battle at last. One-fourth of the revision was devoted to setting up a State Corporation Commission that would have control over the railroads and big business. Stuart supported the creation of such a commission, and he played an active role in securing acceptance of Article XII of the Constitution of 1902. He spoke to the convention on February 14, 1902, on the problem of discrimination and personal privileges. His report centered around railroad discriminations against producers of livestock in Virginia and in favor of Western producers.⁵²

Stuart was not hesitant to get involved in issues that he thought concerned his county and Southwestern Virginia. On six occasions he addressed the convention.

⁵¹For a more detailed discussion of the Constitutional Convention, see Ralph McDanel, The Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1901-1902, (Baltimore, 1928). Also, Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, 80-91; Moger, Bourbonism to Byrd, 181-202; and William Larsen, Montague of Virginia, The Making of a Southern Progressive, (Baton Rouge, La., 1965), Chapter VIII.

⁵²Journal of the Constitutional Convention, 1901-1902, (Richmond, 1902), Vol. II, 2453. Stuart, who was one of the leading livestock producers in Virginia, quoted discriminations made by the Chesapeake and Ohio and the Norfolk and Western Railroads of as much as \$15.70 per railroad car on livestock.

His first speech was made October 2, 1901, and it concerned special road legislation that would authorize local Boards of Supervisors to issue county bonds for the construction of highways. Stuart, who opposed the proposal, felt that the measure "to take out of the hands of the Legislature this authority and power and responsibility is unsafe and unwise."⁵³

On the proposal that duly elected county sheriffs should perform the duties of the county treasurers in counties of less than thirty thousand inhabitants, Stuart spoke to the convention and offered an amendment changing the population consideration to sixteen thousand. His argument was that "the population of a county does not necessarily determine the needs of that county as to sheriffs and treasurers."⁵⁴

When the convention discussed county government, Stuart disapproved of a proposal that would have changed county administration by doing away with the Board of Supervisors. He contended that "our county system is a good one and the blow aimed at our present system of supervisors is not justified by the facts. For that reason I shall oppose it."⁵⁵

⁵³Ibid., Vol. I, 670.

⁵⁴Ibid., 875. Stuart's amendment was rejected.

⁵⁵Ibid., 995.

The Southwestern Virginia farmer informed the convention of his support of a permanent Board of Agriculture on January 29, 1902, and on the following day, he outlined and expounded upon the report of the Committee on Agricultural, Industrial, and Manufacturing Interests and Immigration.⁵⁶

Stuart's record of voting in the constitutional convention proved, however, to be unsatisfactory to many people in the Ninth District. When he ran for Congress in 1910, his Republican opponents brought to public notice the following accusations:

Stuart voted to proclaim the Constitution after giving his pledge to the people that he would vote for submission; he voted against the proposition to give the minority party one member of the Electoral Board in each county and city of the State, and refused to allow the minority party the privilege of selecting the men who should act as judges at the various precincts; he first advocated giving the minority party one of the clerks of election at each precinct, stating on the floor of the convention that to insure fair elections it was necessary for the minority party to have one of the clerks, and he then receded from that position and helped to put a clause in the Constitution which gave both clerks to the majority party; he helped frame and voted for the 'Understanding Clause' which destroyed the suffrage rights of thousands of white men in the district; he voted for the clause in the Constitution which forbids the General Assembly from providing ballots with a 'distinguishing mark or symbol; thereby denying electors a fair ballot; he voted for the clauses which put the poll tax qualification for voting

⁵⁶Ibid., Vol II, 2040-47 and 2064. Stuart also made a speech on Nov. 2, 1901, advocating a Central Board of Education, whose duty would be "to prescribe specifically in each county what books it may use." See Vol. II, 1168.

on the poor man as well as the rich man, after he pledged that no clause would be written into the Constitution which would prevent any white man, 'no matter how poor or uneducated he might be,' from voting; he voted for the unfair partisan registration laws that are found in the Constitution, and that gave to Democratic registrars powers that are dangerous and despotical; and he voted to adopt into the Constitution an apportionment of the State into legislative districts which deprived the people of the Ninth District their just share of representation in the General Assembly. 57

After some important changes in the framework of State government, the reorganization of county government, and the elimination of county judges, the final articles of the constitution were adopted April 4, 1902. 58 The convention adjourned until May 22, 1902, so that the Committee on Final Revision could put the articles together in complete form.

The most "absorbing and memorable incident of the convention" involved the debate over submitting the new constitution to the people for ratification or rejection. 59 Further debate ensued over whether the electorate which had created the convention or the electorate created by the convention should be allowed to vote on it. Carter Glass argued for submission to a "restricted" electorate, and Hal D. Flood was the leader of

57 Pendleton, Political History, 552. These charges were biased by the Republican point of view.

58 For further discussion of the changes made, see Hemphill, Cavalier Commonwealth, 414-415. Also, Larsen, Montague of Virginia, 106-32.

59 Glass, Virginia Democracy, 281.

the group that favored submitting the new constitution to the entire electorate. The delegates were divided, as the State had been over the revision of the Underwood Constitution, along sectional and party lines. Naturally, Republicans and western Democrats favored submission. The urban, "black belt," and Eastern Democrats wanted to proclaim the constitution.

Hal D. Flood maintained that the convention was "honor bound to submit its labors to the voters who had created it."⁶⁰ He was referring to the Norfolk Pledge authored by Carter Glass.⁶¹ Glass reversed his stand and argued that if the Negroes are "fit and competent" to vote on the work of the convention, they are "fit and competent" to assume the responsibilities of citizenship and therefore should not be disfranchised.⁶²

The Norfolk Pledge, which had promised submission to the people, was ignored when the confession was made that its purpose had been to secure a majority of votes in the 1900 referendum in favor of holding a convention.⁶³ The recession of the convention gave the delegates an opportunity to return to their counties, not only to "explain" the suffrage clause, but also to gauge public opinion on the submission question. Mass meetings were held, and there

⁶⁰Ibid., 282.

⁶¹Ibid., 281-282. See this chapter, 37.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Proceedings and Debates, Vol II, 3187 and 3199.
Cited in Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, 85.

appeared to be considerable sentiment for proclaiming the constitution. The newspapers of the State, however, had been active in "educating" the people to favor proclamation. The Richmond Times argued that submission to the vote of the people would "stir up in Virginia the biggest wrangle the State has suffered since the days of reconstruction."⁶⁴ The Times, along with the Charlottesville Daily Progress and the Lynchburg News edited by Carter Glass, ran continuous editorials favoring proclamation. The Norfolk Virginian-Pilot was one of the few papers that expressed reservations.⁶⁵

Henry Carter Stuart was one of the few western Democrats who favored proclamation of the constitution. In a speech at Lebanon on May 6, 1902, he sought release from the pledge he had made to the people of Russell County to vote for submission of the new constitution to the electorate for ratification or rejection.⁶⁶ The Lebanon News reported that Stuart again reassured his constituents that no white man would be disfranchised by the new suffrage laws.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Richmond Times, April 6, 1902 Cited in Pulley, Old Virginia Restored, 87.

⁶⁵ See Pulley, 86-87.

⁶⁶ Pendleton, Political History, 462.

⁶⁷ Ibid. No date is given for the newspaper. Pendleton goes on to say that Stuart did see to it that the suffrage laws did not prevent the illiterate white people from voting in Russell County. The registration boards in other areas of the Ninth District, however, refused registration to thousands of white Republicans. This, of course, was an issue when Stuart ran for the district's Congressional seat.

When the constitutional convention reconvened, three proposals were placed before the delegates. One called for submission to the "unabridged" electorate. It was defeated by a vote of 54 to 40. The second plan, which was similarly defeated, proposed submission to the "restricted" electorate. The third proposition, calling for proclamation by the Convention, was passed by a vote of 48 to 38.⁶⁸

The convention adopted the constitution on June 6, 1902. A resolution was passed to provide for "recognition by the political departments of the government and to that end the General Assembly shall be convened at an early date."⁶⁹ The convention adjourned sine die on June 26, 1902, and an extraordinary session of the General Assembly pledged allegiance to the new Constitution on July 15, 1902.⁷⁰

The Challenge to the Machine

Virginia's Democratic Party was divided by factional warfare after 1902. The disfranchisement of the Negro and many illiterate whites deprived the Republican Party of the majority of its support. Virginia politics were characterized by a one-party system because of the increased and unchallenged control of the State by the Democrats.

⁶⁸ Glass, Virginia Democracy, 282.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 283.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

The only contest left was between the factions of the Democratic Party. There was a major struggle from 1901 until 1919, when Machine leader Thomas Martin died.

The younger members of the Democratic Party were dissatisfied with the established order, and they began to express more progressive ideas. They soon were labeled as "anti-Machine" men. The leader of the progressive faction was Andrew Jackson Montague, a lawyer from Campbell County. Jackson entered State politics when he announced his candidacy for the party's gubernatorial nomination in 1901. He opposed the Machine candidate, Claude Swanson. Jackson's support came from the independent party members such as Carter Glass, Henry St. George Tucker, Westmoreland Davis, and Henry Carter Stuart. The main thrust of Jackson's campaign was criticism of the Martin Machine as an "unhealthy element in Virginia politics."⁷¹

The Democratic Party met in Norfolk in August, and Montague was unanimously named the party's nominee for Governor. Swanson's name was not even presented to the convention. This was the first major challenge to the Machine, and it had been successful.

⁷¹Larsen, Montague of Virginia, 99. For a more detailed discussion of the 1901 campaign for Governor, see Larsen, Chapter VII.

A former Democrat, Colonel J. Hampton Hoge, made the race for Governor as the Republican nominee.⁷² Montague, however, was elected on his platform of progressive change for Virginia's roads, schools, and election laws. The most important political change brought about by Montague's administration was the passage of a bill in 1905 which allowed the voters to choose, in primary elections, the nominees who would represent their party in the general election.

The new State Corporation Commission created by the Constitution of 1902 was organized by Montague. The commission was to consist of three members appointed by the Governor, subject to the approval of the General Assembly. Henry Carter Stuart was rewarded, not only for his support of the establishment of the the State Corporation Commission in the constitutional convention, but also for his political support of Montague in the gubernatorial election of 1901. Stuart, along with Beverley T. Crump and Henry Fairfax, was appointed to the first commission by Montague in 1903. He served on the State Corporation Commission until 1908.⁷³

The 1905 race for Governor marked the State's first primary election. Henry St. George Tucker entered the race

⁷² Ibid., 109.

⁷³ William A. Stuart II, interview, Dec. 29, 1969.

as the "anti-Machine" candidate. Claude Swanson again received the Machine's backing. A third candidate came into the race and brought the issue of prohibition to State politics. William H. Mann, a supporter of the Machine, was backed by the Anti-Saloon League and its leader, the Reverend James Cannon, who were asking for an "enabling act" that would allow the people to vote on prohibition.⁷⁴ The race ended in a success for the Machine when Swanson received the party's nomination, and was then elected to the governorship in the fall election.⁷⁵

William Mann and Henry St. George Tucker made their second attempts to receive the Democratic Party nomination for Governor in 1909. This time Mann received the full support of Thomas Martin and the Machine Democrats. The Machine further made an alliance with the Anti-Saloon League in order to secure the support to defeat the popular Tucker.

⁷⁴In 1886 the General Assembly passed a local option law to permit the counties, cities, or towns to prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages. According to Cannon and the Anti-Saloon League, too few areas had established local prohibition. Therefore they sought state-wide laws. See Hemphill, Cavalier Commonwealth, 418. Also, see Alvin Hall, "The Prohibition Movement in Virginia, 1826-1916," (Master's Thesis, University of Virginia, 1964).

⁷⁵For further discussion of Swanson, see Henry C. Ferrell, "Claude Swanson of Virginia," (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1964). In 1904 Mann had sponsored a bill that abolished the sale of liquor in small towns. The enactment of the Mann Act had encouraged Mann to seek the governorship.

In the absence of serious Republican opposition from their nominee William P. Kent, Mann was elected. Thus the Machine continued its control of the Commonwealth for four more years.⁷⁶

This control was strengthened in 1910, when both independents and Machine men alike joined in an effort to oust the State's only Republican Congressman from the Ninth District. The Democratic Party solidly backed independent Henry Carter Stuart in his campaign against C. Bascom Slemm.

⁷⁶ For further discussion of Mann, see William Rhodes, "The Administration of William H. Mann, Governor of Virginia, 1910-1914," Master's Thesis, University of Virginia, 1965). Also see Robert H. Hohner, "Prohibition and Virginia Politics: William Hodges Mann versus Henry St. George Tucker, 1909," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 74 (January, 1966), 88-107.

CHAPTER III

"REDEEM THE NINTH"
CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN, 1910

The "Fighting Ninth," Virginia's Republican District

The literacy test and the poll tax established by the new Constitution of 1902 caused a decrease in the number of Virginians who voted. The Republican Party lost many of its supporters when these qualifications disfranchised the Negroes and numerous illiterate white people who had voted for the party. The few Virginia Republicans left turned their energies to national party leaders in hopes of receiving salaried appointments in the Republican administration in the Nation's capital. The Democratic Party was in such complete control that the two-party system did not exist in most parts of Virginia. The Democrats controlled the General Assembly, which in turn selected the circuit judges. The circuit judges appointed the county electoral boards, which were responsible for the appointment of all judges, clerks, and registrars of elections in the counties.¹ For this reason there was general

¹Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slemp," 22.

indifference among even qualified voters. Since most Virginians disagreed with many of the national Republican policies, they were content with the policies and leadership of the Democratic Party. Therefore, they did not cast their votes on election days.²

In one section of Virginia, however, the two-party system was still very much in operation. The "Fighting Ninth" Congressional District, which was made up of thirteen counties in Southwestern Virginia, was the citadel of Republican strength in the State. Far from following the prevalent pattern of a Democratic Virginia, the Ninth District sent Republicans to its Congressional seat for twenty years. The people in the southwestern district were not as apathetic as the Virginia electorate as a whole. "The total number of votes in that district declined less than twenty percent between 1900 and 1904, for example, in contrast to the decrease of more than fifty percent in the State as a whole."³ Colonel Campbell Sloop, and later his son, C. Bascom Sloop, of Wise County, gave the Republicans in Southwestern Virginia effective leadership and representation from 1902 to 1922.⁴ It was only natural that the Democratic Party made strenuous attempts to defeat the State's only Republican Congressman.

²See Hemphill, Cavalier Commonwealth, 416-417.

³Ibid., 417

⁴The Sloops were "virtually the Republican Party in Virginia." Glass, Virginia Democracy, 365.

Elections in the Ninth District were generally hard-fought contests, but the money that the Slemp Family made in coal and timber enabled them to successfully finance their campaigns against the Democrats.⁵

One of the most difficult political battles, as well as one of the most exciting Congressional campaigns in the history of Virginia politics, took place in 1910 when the Democratic Party nominated the equally wealthy and influential Henry Carter Stuart of Russell County to oppose C. Bascom Slemp.⁶ "Never before in the district's history had there been a campaign in which such vast sums of money were spent by both sides." For the Democrats the 1910 affair represented the "supreme effort" of their Party to "oust the tenacious Slemp."⁷

Pre-Campaign Activities

The Democratic Party made strenuous efforts to draft Stuart to oppose Slemp, but Stuart would not readily agree to the nomination. Rumors circulated that Stuart was holding out for the nomination for the United States Senate, in opposition to incumbent Senator Thomas Martin. But in

⁵ Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slemp," 30.

⁶ The only written accounts of this elections are Hathorn, 30-71, and Pendleton, Political History 545-555. Also, Hathorn, "Congressional Campaign in the Fighting Ninth: The Contest Between C. Bascom Slemp and Henry C. Stuart," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 66(1958), 337-344.

⁷ Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slemp," 42.

February, 1910, Stuart, who had been a background contender for the gubernatorial nomination in 1909, dispelled the rumor by saying that he was not a candidate for the Senatorship, but that he would be in the race for the governorship in 1913.⁸ The Ninth District Democrats held their nominating convention in March, 1910, in order to give the Party and its candidate plenty of time to work on their campaign. It was a large and enthusiastic crowd that met in Bristol, March 2, 1910, and "in the midst of the wildest scenes of enthusiasm and with the oft repeated slogan, 'Redeem the District,' Henry Carter Stuart was chosen to oppose Slemp."⁹ Although Stuart yielded to the solicitations of his party, the Republicans believed that the Machine leaders had promised Stuart the nomination for Governor in 1913 if he would run for Congress in the Ninth District.¹⁰ Several members of the Democratic Party supported the Republican rumor by expressing the belief that Stuart's mind was "pretty well

⁸ Pendleton, Political History, 545. As early as 1906, Stuart had been mentioned as a possible gubernatorial candidate. Henry St. George Tucker Papers, C.C. Burns to Tucker, May 23, 1906; J. P. Pollard to Tucker, May 26, 1906. The Tucker Papers are located in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C. Cited in Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slemp," 49. Also see William H.T. Squires, Through Centuries Three, (Portsmouth, Va., 1929), 566.

⁹ Harrisonburg Daily News, March 3, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, 48.

¹⁰ Pendleton, Political History, 545.

fixed upon the governorship" even while the Congressional battle was still in progress.¹¹ The rumor that Stuart had compromised with the Machine was further substantiated when Henry St. George Tucker announced to the press after a Party conference in late 1910 in Washington, D.C., that Stuart would be the Machine candidate for Governor in 1913.¹² If Stuart had ever been an anti-Machine man opposed to Martin, differences had evidently been compromised when Senator Thomas Martin expressed a hope of victory for Stuart in the Richmond Times-Dispatch, March 5, 1910.¹³

C. Bascom Slep had a difficult time deciding to run for Congress in 1910. In the early part of the year, he confided to close friends that he would not seek the Congressional seat, but that he would postpone the public announcement of his plans until after the Democratic Convention.¹⁴ After the Democrats nominated Stuart, Slep reconsidered his decision: "Now that they have

¹¹ Tucker Papers, E. Hunton, Jr. to Tucker, July 9, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slep," 49.

¹² Pendleton, Political History, 545-546. This prediction was verified in 1913.

¹³ Ibid., 546.

¹⁴ Lewis P. Summers Papers, C.B. Slep to L.P. Summers, March 7, 1910. The Summers Papers are located in Alderman Library, University of Virginia. Cited in Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slep," 46. "Slep felt that such an announcement might encourage the opposition to put up a strong candidate." Lewis P. Summers was one of Slep's lieutenants for over twenty years.

nominated Mr. Stuart, who is their strongest man, backed by the machinery of the State, I do not think that I ought to withdraw from this contest."¹⁵ Only two months later, Slemo again changed his mind. He stated that he had "decided that it is best for me not to make the race for Congress this fall. Physically, I am not in shape to make a campaign and it would not be fair to the Party to attempt it."¹⁶ It was rumored in party circles that Slemo feared that he might not have the full support of his party. One of his fellow Republicans, J.J. Alley of Bristol, had addressed a circular letter to Ninth District party members saying that there were "hundreds and hundreds of Republican voters in the district who are tired of voting the Slemo ticket and cannot be whipped to do so again this fall under the existing conditions."¹⁷ Ninth District Democrats were confident that these unsatisfied Republicans would desert Slemo for Stuart.¹⁸ When the Republicans held their nominating convention in Abingdon on July 20, 1910, Slemo

¹⁵ Summers Papers, Slemo to L.P. Summers, March 7, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, 46.

¹⁶ Summers Papers, Slemo to Summers, May 26, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, 47.

¹⁷ Summers Papers, W.S. Keesling to C.B. Slemo, April 3, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, 47. The Congressional election of 1910 was the first time in which the "Insurgents" attacked the policies of Old Guard Republicans. The Taft Administration was trying to limit Speaker Joe Cannon. This conflict naturally spread to the Congressional campaigns. The Democrats were eager to take advantage of the split in the Republican Party.

¹⁸ Richmond Times-Dispatch, Oct. 15, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, 48.

was ardently nominated for a third term in Congress. The convention, which was described as "one of the largest and most enthusiastic conventions ever held by the Republicans," gave sufficient display of Slempp's popularity.¹⁹ Since all the delegates were instructed for Slempp, it was evident that the Republican Party had given their vote of confidence to the man who had "successfully withstood the concerted attacks of the Democratic Machine in Virginia."²⁰

The election of 1910 was noted for the corrupt election procedures and methods which were condoned by both parties and candidates. The Virginia poll tax requirements compelled both parties to begin their campaigns in the spring of election years. It was necessary to find out who had not paid, or could not pay, the tax. For twenty years Slempp financed the poll tax drives of his district. The Republicans took for granted that their poll taxes would be paid for them. Slempp justified his actions, as well as those of his party, with the following story:

Once upon a time a man and his family started to Egypt to see the pyramids. He arrived at Alexandria in due time and inquired how he could get out to the

¹⁹ Pendleton, Political History, 546.

²⁰ Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slempp," 42-42.

pyramids. He was told that in order to do that it would be necessary for him to use camels, so he proceeded to ascertain what they would cost. They wanted to charge him as he thought an outrageous price, and he attempted to 'jew' them down, but failed. He then said he would not go to the pyramids, and he came back to America without accomplishing the desired visit. That is the way I feel about the present situation in our district. We must not make as great a mistake as did the traveler.²¹

Slemp was never "parsimonious" in the matter of paying poll taxes. "In this connection, Mr. Slemp always had an advantage over his Democratic opponents."²²

The Democratic Party was happy over their choice of Stuart. He was a popular farmer and businessman, but most important, all factions of the Party solidly supported his candidacy. The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported:

"Henry C. Stuart is the man. Never in the memory of living man has there been a time when the Democrats were so united. Not a dissenting voice is to be heard. The Party is for the nominee to a man."²³

Money was important in Ninth District elections, and Stuart had the money to spend on the race. Many Republicans regarded Stuart as "the richest man west of the Blue Ridge."²⁴ After Stuart accepted his party's

²¹ Summers Papers, C.B. Slemp to L.P. Summers, April 30, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, 42.

²² Ibid., 45-46.

²³ Richmond Times-Dispatch, March 28, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, 50.

²⁴ C. Bascom Slemp Notebooks, G.B. Johnson to Slemp, Nov. 14, 1910. The Slemp Notebooks are located in the Southwest Virginia Museum, Big Stone Gap, Va. Cited in Hathorn, 50.

nomination, the Bristol Convention named a special committee, under the chairmanship of R. Tate Irvine, to take care of campaign finances. The committee called a meeting on March 15, 1910, to discuss ways of securing money for the "payment of poll taxes of delinquent and unregistered voters."²⁵ Irvine reported to the committee in a circular letter:

Our work for the present, of course, will be confined strictly to poll tax matters. In doing this it will be necessary to qualify every possible voter who is not registered or transferred so that later we can register and transfer them in time to vote.²⁶

When the Democratic campaign committee met, a reported twenty thousand dollars was raised for "poll tax matters." The Republicans charged that it was the plan of the Democratic Party "to pay the poll taxes of all delinquent floaters in the district and have them vote for Mr. Stuart."²⁷ The Republicans felt their charges were confirmed when the Democratic Headquarters sent out a letter to the precinct workers. The letter stressed that it was of "utmost importance that we know just how many Democrats there are at each precinct, how many Republicans, and how many floaters, and above all, know exactly who they are."²⁸

²⁵ Pendleton, Political History, 546.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 546-547.

²⁸ Ibid., 547. "The suffrage and election laws had brought into existence a host of floaters in the Ninth District, composed of men who were willing to commercialize their suffrage rights."

The Campaign.

While Democratic campaign workers and precinct captains were busy getting all possible voters registered, Stuart prepared his speeches and mapped out his plans of action against Slemo. It was evident that Stuart would take the initiative in the campaign.²⁹ He opened the campaign at Gate City, in Scott County, on August 20, 1910. He was greeted by the applause and cheers of an enthusiastic audience. The Richmond Times-Dispatch called the gathering "one of the greatest political demonstrations in the history of Scott County."³⁰ Stuart, who was an eloquent speaker, hoped to make his speeches serve as a definite advantage over Slemo.³¹ Stuart opened his speech by pointing out what he considered to be the two major political issues for the election:

By common consent throughout the United States, the tariff in general, and the Payne-Aldrich Bill in particular, together with some legislative methods known as "Cannonism," are the issues on which the next House of

²⁹ Glass, Virginia Democracy, 365.

³⁰ Richmond Times-Dispatch, August 21, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slemo," 50.

³¹ Slemo was not fond of speech-making. Instead he personalized his approach by "cornering doubtful individuals and by talking confidentially with small groups. He rode the narrow wooded trails, stopping to talk the language of the mountaineers in their own cabins." Hathorn, 25. This, of course, proved to be an advantage over the less-personal Stuart. Only on one occasion did Stuart use mountain slang in his campaigning. During one of his speeches, he was heckled by Republican Bruce Johnson. Finally Stuart addressed Johnson by saying, "Bruce, I don't have time to shuck 'nubins' tonight." William G. Smith, interview, Aug. 26, 1969.

Representatives is to be elected. Those who have adequate defence (sic) are eager to present it. Those who have a strong cause are even anxious to join battle and do not dodge. It has been found, however, very hard to hold Republicans to this issue, especially the office-holding standpatters.³²

Since Slessor had supported the Payne-Aldrich Bill, Stuart proposed to make the tariff a leading issue. He reviewed the tariff record of the Republican Party, making special note of the 1908 Republican platform which had "distinctly promised the people downward revision of the tariff."³³ Stuart stated that "the Payne-Aldrich Bill was presented as the redemption of the Republican pledges."³⁴ He went on to cite examples of how the bill made overall tariff schedules higher by quoting figures on the steel trust, and on the woolen, cotton, and rubber industries. Stuart pointed out that Slessor himself had said in the House of Representatives that the Payne-Aldrich Bill did not properly protect the industries of the Ninth District, but that "...he voted for the bill because he put his Republicanism higher than his own personal interests; but hoped the bill would come back from the Senate in such

³²T. W. Preston, editor, Addresses of Famous South-west Virginians, (Bristol, Va.-Tenn., 1937), 499. The full text of Stuart's opening speech is in this book, 499-508. Henceforth, this book will be referred to as Preston, Addresses.

³³Ibid., 500. Stuart's speech was also carried in the Richmond Times-Dispatch, Aug. 21, 1910.

³⁴Ibid.

shape as to meet his approval and that of his people." Stuart went on to say the Republican majority "ran the steam roller over him and reduced the duties on coal, iron ore, lumber, and hides, the things he was most anxious to protect and in which his constituents were most interested."³⁵

This was Stuart's first mistake. While he was labeling upward revision of tariff as a violation of the Republican platform on which Slemph had been elected, Stuart contradicted himself by also condemning Slemph for allowing the reduction of duties on coal, iron ore, and lumber. As his point of attack, Stuart continued his speech by charging:

"...the Republican Party has maintained a dispensary of protection from which it has dispensed bounties to the great interests of this country who are the chief contributors to its campaign funds.

High tariff breeds trusts. It begets extravagance and wastefulness and at the same time, unjust discrimination in the distribution of money after it is in the treasury. The present congress (sic) will appropriate a thousand million dollars and of this less than twenty million will come to the South.

The farmers, however, are not so much interested in the appropriations. They are interested in the facts that they must pay enormous duties on everything they buy and buy it from the trusts and sell everything that have to sell to a trust at its own prices.

³⁵Ibid., 502.

The high cost of living is one of the most vital questions of all. What caused it and who profits by it? 36

At this point in his speech, Stuart proclaimed himself a protectionist by stating his own tariff position:

I would be ashamed to condemn the works of the Republican Party and the record of my opponent without a definite statement on my own views. I am not against the tariff. I am against the use of the tariff to milk the public into the overflowing pails of a few. Speaking for myself, after observing labor conditions in the Old World, I cannot commit myself to a tariff policy which would leave wholly out of view the difference of cost in production here and abroad. I know there are some important American products in which, owing to our natural situation and superior facilities, the unit cost of labor is smaller than in the foreign product, but that is the exception, as I believe, and not the rule. Hence, I would favor only such a tariff as would distinctly guard the wages of workmen, and one which would justify at least the present standards of wages in this country.

Furthermore, I would yield all prejudices for or against the trick phrases of party platforms. I would unite with moderate and conservative men of any party who honestly and sincerely want to give substantial relief to the masses of the people, and who to that end would limit duties on all foreign articles competing with American products to such figures as would cover the difference between the cost of production here and abroad. 37

³⁶Ibid., 504.

³⁷Ibid., 505-506. Stuart had traveled outside of the United States a number of times on cattle-buying trips to England, Europe, South America, and the Far East. Mrs. Harry C. Stuart, interview, Sept. 12, 1969. For discussion of this speech, also see Pendleton, Political History, 547-548.

Thus Stuart gave all appearances of agreeing with the 1908 Republican idea of tariff protection based on comparative costs. He was then subject to the criticism that he deserted the Democratic theory of tariffs for revenue only. His position disagreed with his party's creed of fifty years that "protection was an intolerable vice that had been inflicted upon the masses by the Republican Party."³⁸ The Democratic platform of 1908 stated: "We denounce protectionism as a robbery of the many to enrich the few,"³⁹ Although Stuart's apparent support of "protectionism" was qualified, he surprised his Democratic supporters and pleased his Republican opponents. While Slemp "was given a golden opportunity to satirize upon his opponent's conversion to Republican principles," Democratic leaders throughout the State found themselves in a difficult position.⁴⁰

The first discussion of Stuart's tariff policy came in the Bristol Herald-Courier, which stated that "Mr. Stuart is standing on the same tariff line with President Taft."⁴¹ This statement began a series of editorial replies in other State newspapers. The

³⁸ Pendleton, Political History, 548.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Tucker Papers, J.C. Wysor to Tucker, Sept. 9, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slemp," 53.

⁴¹ Pendleton, Political History, 549. He gives no date for the newspaper.

Lynchburg News, edited by Carter Glass, published a sarcastic editorial criticizing Stuart. In turn, the Roanoke Times, which was considered to be Stuart's "mouthpiece," printed a sharp answer, which said:

The Lynchburg News hears, through the Bristol Herald-Courier, that Stuart is on the same tariff line with Taft. Thereupon it protests dismally, in double leads. Such things cannot be. We gather that in the opinion of the News if Stuart is on a platform which he believes to be right and Taft gets on it also, then Stuart must get off instantly and wander with the News into the woods seeking for himself a new platform. The truth is Stuart knows where he is and Mr. Taft doesn't know where he is. 42

The Lynchburg News, in a lengthy rejoinder, pointed out that "Mr. Stuart---if his utterances on the tariff meant anything---was standing squarely on the Republican tariff platform and had repudiated the platform of his party." The editorial concluded:

The News may not have much sense, as the Times graciously suggests; but it thinks it has sense enough to know that Democratic campaigners in the Ninth Congressional District will not relish having thrust in their faces editorial declarations from the Roanoke Times to the effect that Mr. Stuart, tariff platform candidate, stands on the same Republican signer of the Payne-Aldrich Act. 43

Stuart gave his approval to the editorials of the Roanoke Times, and in all subsequent speeches, he maintained the tariff views given in his opening speech at Gate City. 44

42 Ibid., 549. No date is given for the newspapers.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

Stuart enlisted the aid of important Democratic leaders by asking them to come and speak in the Ninth District in his behalf. The speakers who campaigned for him either endorsed Stuart's tariff views or silently assented to them. Carter Glass was the only exception. In the first speech on his Ninth District speaking tour, Glass declared in Marion on September 5, 1910:

I am a Democrat. I stand upon the tariff plank of the Democratic platform that has been handed down to us by the party in its platforms since the formation of the party. I believe in a tariff for revenue only, with the government economically administered.⁴⁵

The reasons for Glass's "stab" at Stuart were twofold. First, Glass was aware of the fact that Stuart had approved the editorials of the Roanoke Times on his tariff position. Glass, of course, deemed it necessary to clarify his Democratic theories by showing that he and Stuart were not in agreement on tariffs. Secondly, Glass felt it necessary to distinguish his Democracy by contrasting it to Stuart's Democracy. Before 1910 Stuart had been associated with Glass and Henry St. George Tucker as being an "anti-Machine" man in opposition to the Martin Machine. Glass perhaps suspected "the arrangement that had been made with the Machine to suppress opposition to Stuart for the governorship in 1913."⁴⁶

⁴⁵Ibid., 549-550.

⁴⁶Ibid. Glass completed only one more speaking engagement in the Ninth District.

C. Bascom Slemp opened his campaign for re-election at Jonesville, in Lee County, on September 5, 1910. Slemp, who could not claim the oratorical eloquence of his rival, made a speech that was considered "the most effective of his career."⁴⁷ Lee County was his birthplace, and he was at ease with his fellow mountaineers. He talked to them with the humor and cliches that the mountain people understood. He began his speech by saying:

"The ashes of my ancestors for one hundred years repose beneath the soil of this county. For generations they lived here as tillers of the soil, not landlords, but plain farmers."⁴⁸

Slemp continued his address by reminding his audience that he, too, had been reared on a farm and worked as a farm boy. He said that he believed he could "build as good a haystack, or plow as straight a furrow as any of them who seem to think they have a claim to support because they own a farm."⁴⁹ His speech clearly and effectively, with statistics and facts, reviewed the records of both parties on important national issues, particularly the tariff issue. He accused Stuart of trying to bring to his support many Republican protectionists by his tariff views. Slemp, of course, did not pass up the chance to

⁴⁷ Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slemp," 54.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 54-55. Hathorn states that this remark was aimed at Stuart since he owned several farms in Southwestern Virginia. The complete text of Slemp's address may be found in J. Frederick Essary, editor, Selected Addresses of C. Bascom Slemp, (Washington, 1939), 39-68. Henceforth this book will be referred to as Essary, Selected Addresses.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

satirize his opponent:

"From a careful reading of my opponent's speech in this campaign, I have come to the conclusion that he is going to try to crowd me off my tariff platform, but I am going to stick to it. I was elected on it; I served on it in Congress, and I am going to be elected on it again. I am going to stand on it in spite of all my opponent may say or do. He can stand on it with me if he will do so. There is plenty of room for us both, and other repentant Democrats, and I will welcome him; but I want him to stand on it as a Republican. 50

Slemp urged Stuart, if he agreed with the Republican tariff, to wear the Republican button. Slemp declared:

"I am a protectionist. I belong to a protection party and by reason of this can lend some real aid to this policy that he has recently discovered to be good. He says his observations abroad have taught him this. If so, I am in favor of sending all the Democratic Congressmen from Virginia on an observation trip to Europe right away. 51

Slemp likened Stuart's conversion to the Republican tariff doctrine to the story of an old Roman governor and St. Paul:

"After hearing the truths of Christianity, which were explained to him by the great Apostle, he exclaimed, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!'" 52

Slemp then went on to say, "Let us hope that in the case of my opponent that his conversion is complete, and that we will not have to quote another good hymn, 'Almost Persuaded-- But Lost.'" 53

⁵⁰Essary, Selected Addresses, 42.

⁵¹Ibid., 42-43.

⁵²Ibid., 43.

⁵³Ibid.

On the issue of Speaker Cannon and the Payne-Aldrich Tariff, Slep did not deny that he had supported them. "On the later, Slep even admitted framing certain features of the law."⁵⁴ He pointed out that the new tariff had already changed a "treasury deficit of \$58,000,000...into a surplus of \$28,000,000."⁵⁵ He argued that the tariff did not violate any party promises. To the contrary, he said that of the changes in the Dingley Tariff of 1897, six hundred and forty-five items had been reduced, while only two hundred and twenty articles showed increases.⁵⁶

In defense of Stuart's charge that he had allowed Congress to lower duties on Southwestern Virginia products, Slep replied that he thought "coal, iron ore, and timber received sufficient protection. The duty on coal was at the rate of 45¢ per ton, iron ore at 15¢ per ton, and lumber at \$1.25 per 1,000 feet."⁵⁷

⁵⁴Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slep," 56.

⁵⁵Essary, Selected Addresses, 48.

⁵⁶Hathorn, 56. Hathorn points out that technically Slep was correct, but that he failed to tell the entire truth of the matter. The Payne-Aldrich Tariff "provided for more increases than increases in duties, but the decreases were rarely on items of significance, and for more duties were left untouched that were changed." J.D. Hicks, The American Nation, (New York, 1945), 425.

⁵⁷Ibid. Hathorn corrects Slep on this by pointing out that he failed to mention that the former protection on coal was 67¢, iron ore was 40¢, and lumber was \$2.00. F.W. Taussig, The Tariff History of the United States, (New York, 1923), 386.

Henry Carter Stuart had limited his first speech to national issues, with the hope of preventing Slemp and other Republicans from attacking his political record on State matters. Slemp, of course, had no intentions of allowing that issue to lie uncovered. In the end of his Jonesville speech, Slemp said:

"A discussion of State issues has no particular part in this campaign since neither candidate for Congress has any power to change the State laws. It is pertinent, however, to mention the record of any public servant as to whether he has or has not fulfilled the pledges and promises he made to the people on which he was elected. My opponent was elected to an honorable office, from his own county, upon a platform of his party which promised submission to the people of the State of a Constitution after it had been prepared by the Constitutional Convention. This pledge was violated and it is pertinent to discuss that feature as to whether or not my opponent was justified in violating his pledge to the people."⁵⁸

This statement had the effect of putting Stuart on the defensive. The Republican speakers and newspapers thoroughly discussed the issue, charging Stuart with "the betrayal of the confidence of the people whose suffrage he was now seeking."⁵⁹ But his opponents were not content to stop there. They deliberately brought Stuart's voting record at the constitutional convention to public notice.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Ibid., 551.

⁵⁹ Pendleton, Political History, 552.

⁶⁰ See Chapter II, 46.

Stuart made no move to deny these charges. Instead, he stood firm on his voting record by making a single statement in a speech at Pocahontas on September 9, 1910: "I would repeat every vote I cast on important clauses of the new Constitution."⁶¹ The only charge that Stuart answered was the one concerning his support of the "Understanding Clause," which had injured the pride of so many illiterate mountaineers in Southwestern Virginia. To tone down the criticism, Stuart tried to play up "white supremacy," and to use the "race bogey" as a vote-getter.⁶² Stuart defended himself by saying he had supported the franchise restriction "in the interest of white supremacy in Virginia, necessary for our civilization."⁶³ The Richmond Times-Dispatch quoted Stuart as saying, "If it was wrong to give the negro the right of suffrage, it was right to use every means known to the superior race to take it from him."⁶⁴ Stuart pointed out that "not a white man in Virginia today would publicly advocate restoration of the ballot to the negro, and that neither my opponent nor my opponent's supporters would dare take a position which might be remotely construed as being in that direction."⁶⁵

⁶¹ Ibid., 553.

⁶² "Race bogey" is used as a term in Andrew Buni, The Negro in Virginia Politics, 1902-1965, (Charlottesville, 1967), 59.

⁶³ Ibid. Also, Richmond Times-Dispatch, Aug. 21, 1910.

⁶⁴ Preston, Addresses, 506-507. Also Richmond Times-Dispatch, Aug. 21, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, "G. Bascom Sloop," 53.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 507.

In regard to the restrictions of the Constitution, the remainder of Stuart's argument stated:

The convention provided for men who were then voters or who were to register in the next three years tests that would admit practically every white man while excluding the great mass of negroes. A soldier or the son of a soldier was permitted to vote. A man who paid a certain tax could vote. The 'understanding clause' was adopted, the purpose of which was to sift the white man into one pile and the negro into another. Under these provisions practically every white man who applied and who made any effort to answer the questions asked him was registered. ⁶⁶

Stuart went on to say:

...one thing remains to be done to finish the work of the Virginia Constitutional Convention. That is to secure the repeal of the Fifteenth Amendment so that Virginia may impose no condition on white suffrage. If elected to Congress, I certainly would vote for its repeal. I ask my opponent to say if he would so vote. ⁶⁷

Then in his next breath, Stuart ironically qualified this pledge by saying, "I am no enemy of the negro." ⁶⁸

Stuart's astute challenge was designed to trap Slomp regardless of how he replied. If Slomp said that he approved repeal, he would be condemning a cherished Republican principle. On the other hand, if he opposed repeal, the Democrats would accuse him of ignoring white supremacy. ⁶⁹ The Democrats had already berated Slomp because he had not voted for separate streetcars for Negroes and whites in Washington. ⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Ibid., 507.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 508. Also, Richmond Times-Dispatch, cited in Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slomp," ⁵³.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Hathorn, 56.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 56-57.

Slemp, who was aware of Stuart's trap, gave such a clever and indefinite reply to the challenge that the Democrats temporarily dropped the race question. He replied:

"So far as the Fifteenth Amendment goes, I should say this, that we are at peace at the present time with all the states in the Union. The Negro question is more nearly settled in the South than it has been since the days of the Civil War. The Fifteenth Amendment has been practically abrogated in so far as the Southern states are concerned, and the Northern states have accepted in good spirit the action of all Southern states in reference to white supremacy. This I should maintain at all hazards, at all times, and under all circumstances."⁷¹

Needless to say, the "Redeem the Ninth" Congressional race received state-wide attention. Stuart was inviting such Democratic Party names as Thomas Martin, Claude Swanson, Andrew Jackson Montague, James Hoge Tyler, and Henry St. George Tucker to speak in Southwestern Virginia. Most of them expressed optimism that "this time the Party would erase the last Republican representative from the Old Dominion's delegation."⁷² When Admiral Richard E. Byrd returned to his home after speaking for Stuart, he stated that "the very stars in their courses fight for the democratic (sic) party (sic)."⁷³

⁷¹ Essary, Selected Addresses, 60-61.

⁷² Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slemp," 58.

⁷³ Glass, Virginia Democracy, 365.

Encouraging reports of Slemp loosing voters and of overflow crowds at rallies for Stuart spread over the State. The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported:

Henry C. Stuart, the Democratic nominee for Congress in the Ninth District, spoke tonight to the largest audience ever assembled in Marion in a political meeting. The large assembly hall of the court house was packed, and standing room was taken... It was a glorious outpouring of Democracy.

Hundreds of Republicans in the Ninth District have determined to drop Slemp and vote for Stuart. At every appointment even in remote places, he is greeted by unprecedented crowds of enthusiastic voters... no such audiences have ever greeted a Congressional candidate in this district, Democratic or Republican.⁷⁴

While the tide of enthusiasm was running high for Stuart, Slemp attempted to "go one better" by asking the "biggest Republican" in the United States to speak in behalf of his candidacy. "Theodore Roosevelt has promised to make an address to the fighting ninth (sic)..." reported the Richmond Times-Dispatch.⁷⁵ The reactions were mixed in Democratic circles. Some believed, or at least hoped, that Roosevelt's visit would hurt rather than help Slemp. They expected the former President to give an "Insurgent" speech criticizing the Taft Administration and "Cannonism." Should this happen, Slemp and his Republican followers would be disconcerted; Slemp was considered to be one of the "most stalwart of the regular or Cannon forces in the House."⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Richmond Times-Dispatch, Oct. 15, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, 58.

⁷⁵ Ibid., July 20, 1910.

⁷⁶ Hathorn, 60.

Stuart's less assured supporters were afraid of the "magic name" and expressed the opinion that outsiders should not mix in Virginia politics:

"What business has he mixing in Virginia politics? What does he know about the situation in the State? Why should he come all the way down here to tell the people of the Ninth District for whom they should vote? We do not stand in the slightest need of any counsel or assistance from him in the management of the political affairs of this Commonwealth. 77

Over ten thousand people gathered at Bristol to hear Roosevelt speak on October 9, 1910. To everyone's surprise, he neither praised Slemp nor condemned Taft and "Cannonism." Instead Roosevelt talked about "new nationalism." He made only one reference to Slemp:

"I was more than glad to come, especially when Mr. Slemp asked me to come, because Mr. Slemp had a claim upon me that I was more than glad to recognize for he stood as straight as a string by me and what I said while I was President. 78

The Republicans were not all together pleased with the Roosevelt speech, but then, some were relieved that he had not "gone all out" for Slemp:

"Thank God, he only spoke once in your district, and said then as little as possible in your behalf as he could in decency do. Had he spoken twice and loudly demanded your election--Stuart would have won out by 20,000. 79

77 Richmond Times-Dispatch, July 21, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, 59.

78 Ibid., Oct. 8, 1910.

79 Slemp Notebooks, J.A. Fregen to Slemp. Not dated. Cited in Hathorn, 60.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch expressed the happiness over the results of Roosevelt's speech in Democratic circles in a caustic editorial which said:

"If all Slep's endorsements are like the Colonel gave him, after all the hot air that the Slep organs expended by way of advertisement, unlucky Slep! The crumbs that fell from the Colonel's table were infinitesimal. The Colonel knows a loser when he sees one." ⁸⁰

As the election day got nearer, Henry Carter Stuart and C. Bascom Slep intensified their campaign activities. Slep continued to satirize Stuart's tariff stand, as well as to discuss Stuart's constitutional convention record. In a letter to his campaign lieutenant, Lewis Summers, Slep expressed the following opinion:

"The more I think of it the more I am convinced that Mr. Stuart made a fatal mistake in his speech at Gate City in undertaking to get on our tariff platform. If this matter is handled right in the newspapers and on the rostrum, it will not only defeat him by a large majority this fall, but may really mean his elimination from public life." ⁸¹

⁸⁰ Richmond Times-Dispatch, October 11, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, 60.

⁸¹ Summers Papers, C.B. Slep to L.P. Summers, September 15, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, 61.

On the subject of what Stuart had to offer to the voters of the Ninth District, Slemo concluded:

"His speeches display nothing but a wandering from one subject to another in an effort, very like a drowning man's, to grasp some straw whereby he can keep his head above water a little longer."⁸²

Near the end of the campaign, the candidates became more and more venomous in their denunciations. The struggle was clearly marked with political "mud-slinging." Slemo and the Republican charged that Stuart mistreated his tenants. The rumors were so widespread that the Democratic Party managers asked Stuart's tenants to hold a meeting and make a statement in response to the charges. The tenants met and gave out a statement saying that they expected to cast a unanimous vote for Stuart.⁸³

Stuart, in turn, revived the race question and the issue of white supremacy. In a speech that was carried in the Richmond Times-Dispatch, Stuart charged that Slemo considered the Negro vote as counting as much as a white man's vote. "Slemo wants the office and it doesn't matter to him by whose votes he shall get it."⁸⁴

⁸² Preston, Addresses, 68.

⁸³ See Chapter I, 14-15, for "What Mr. Stuart's Tenants Say."

⁸⁴ Richmond Times-Dispatch, Oct. 15, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slemo," 62. It is interesting to note that in view of the Ninth District's Negro population in 1910, Stuart's statement had no validity. Even if the Negro could have voted, Slemo would not have received more than five hundred black votes. See Hathorn, 20.

The Democrats were extremely optimistic and confident by the end of October. The Democratic newspapers were in consensus with the Richmond Times-

Dispatch:

If Henry C. Stuart is not elected to Congress on November 3, the Democratic leaders of the Ninth District are the most deceived set of political managers the state of Virginia has ever seen. Nothing but absolute confidence is expressed by them.⁸⁵

On November 3, 1910, the State Democratic Chairman, J. Taylor Ellyson, expressed confidence in the final outcome, as well as pointing out the importance of the Ninth District race, and the united effort that the Party had made for Stuart.⁸⁶ So great was the state-wide interest that a system of rocket flares was set up to announce the trend of the election every hour on the half hour.⁸⁷

Election Methods in the Ninth District

Election day arrived, and the Congressional race, which has aptly been referred to as a "ding-dong" affair, came to an end.⁸⁸ It was at that time that the true character of the race was blatantly evident. Money was

⁸⁵ Richmond Times-Dispatch, Oct. 30, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slemo," 62.

⁸⁶ Ibid., Nov. 3, 1910.

⁸⁷ Ibid., Nov. 7, 1910. No explanation was given about the actual set-up of the flare system.

⁸⁸ Glass, Virginia Democracy, 365.

necessary for any Ninth District race, but it had never been as important as it was in this particular campaign. It was openly a "boodle" campaign, right down to the time the election results were finally announced.⁸⁹

Two weeks before the election, Will Slemo, brother of the Republican candidate, sent the following message to the county party leaders:

"It has come to our notice through pretty straight sources that the Democrats are depending largely on trying to buy judges of election wherever they can use money. I believe it would be well for you to investigate this matter fully in each precinct in your county."⁹⁰

Election judges were the central figures in any vote-buying plan. This was the way by which the candidate could follow the voter to the ballot box and be assured that he got his money's worth. It was almost impossible for a man who sold his vote under this system to fail to keep his part of the deal.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Pendleton, Political History, 553. This term was used to describe an election that involved the expenditure of large amounts of money on the votes of "floaters."

⁹⁰ Summers Papers, Will Slemo to T.W. McConnell, Oct. 28, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slemo," 61.

⁹¹ If a voter was on the permanent registration roll, (that is, he had registered before 1904), he could ask that an election judge mark his ballot. Section 31 of the 1902 Constitution provided for three judges in each precinct. These judges were to represent the two parties according to the party which had cast the highest number of votes in the preceding election. Since the Democrats were in control of the State, there were two Democratic judges and one Republican judge. Therefore, the man who had sold his vote would request the "right" judge to mark his ballot. See Hathorn, 63.

On election day, November 8, 1910, the county party chairmen were given the money for purchasing votes. They, in turn, allotted money to the precinct captains who actually bought the votes. Estimates of exactly how much each party spent varied. Wade Hamilton, the former county chairman of the Republican Party in Wise County, estimated that "each party spent over \$100,000 in the campaign of 1910, most of it exchanging hands on election day."⁹² Slemp reported that Congressman Hal D. Flood told him that "Stuart spent \$75,000 on the day of election."⁹³ Concurrent estimates said that "it was...reported and believed that two hundred thousand dollars was spent."⁹⁴ One report suggested that as much as \$500,000 was spent.⁹⁵

The stiff competition naturally pushed the cost of votes up in 1910. The average price for a "floater" vote was fifteen dollars.⁹⁶ However, as much as one hundred dollars was given to men who could influence others.⁹⁷

⁹²Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slemp,"63.

⁹³Slemp Notebooks, C.B. Slemp to J.C. Wilson, Oct. 14, 1938. Cited in Hathorn, 63.

⁹⁴Pendleton, Political History, 553.

⁹⁵Buni, The Negro in Virginia Politics, 60. The statement is not fully supported by Buni.

⁹⁶Slemp Notebooks, H.W. Neely to C.B. Slemp, Nov. 9, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, 64.

⁹⁷Hathorn, 64.

A Republican in Grundy, in Buchanan County, reported that "men went at from \$30 to \$60 and some even higher."⁹⁸

J.N. Smith from Cleveland, in Russell County, made the following report to Slemph the day after the election:

I am a Shamed of the mistake was mad at our Place. I did not Bye but 2 men and only got one of them. They bot them like buying cattle. I only handle \$15.00. I spent \$5.00 for Brundy, and \$10.00 on those 2 men. Talk was not worth much where their was as much money as they had. They Pade as high as \$20.00 for votes.⁹⁹

A continuous stream of reports and correspondence to Slemph revealed general conditions and practices of the election.¹⁰⁰ One man reported that he had done his part "as willing as any man. Done most after night, but it all counted."¹⁰¹ Another Slemph supporter apologized that Pulaski did not do any better than it did, and then went on to say that at New River, "they never got one of our men and we got four of theirs."¹⁰² From Stuart's own

⁹⁸Slemph Notebooks, W. McCoy to Slemph, Nov. 10, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, 64.

⁹⁹Ibid., J. N. Smith to Slemph, Nov. 10, 1910.

¹⁰⁰These reports reflected the Republican reaction to and interpretation of the election. Stuart did not keep any records of correspondence that he received during the 1910 campaign.

¹⁰¹Slemph Notebooks, J.A. Kitts to Slemph, Nov. 8, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, 64.

Russell County came the following information:

"We made the best fight at Lebanon we could. We gained it by 36--- three of Stuart's men was (sic) down from his place with all the money could be looked for. They are down in the mouth. I certainly feel good, good."¹⁰²

Despite the warning of Slempe's brother about Stuart's men trying to buy judges, the Democrats controlled several of the Republican judges. Slempe got reports of his judges being paid as much as two hundred and fifty dollars to turn their precinct for Stuart.¹⁰³ Another letter related that Stuart's men "bought Wilson...and every effort for you was blocked. You have no idea how things were done up. They voted men from Tennessee and Kentucky."¹⁰⁴

Not only did Slempe get reports of his judges selling out, but he also heard about the deserters. One piece of correspondence informed him that "ever(sic) straight Republican knew his place and what was assigned to him. Notwithstanding R.L. Elliott, P.L. Kilgore, and W.W. Bond and his four boys helped the Democrats and worked hard for Stuart."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Ibid., V. Jessee to Slempe, Nov. 10, 1910.

¹⁰³ Ibid., G.W. Moore to Slempe, Nov. 10, 1910.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., W.P. Nash to Slempe, Nov. 9, 1910.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., G. Meade to Slempe, Nov. 15, 1910.

The returns of the election were so close that on election night no one was sure who had actually won. The Democrats, however, were so optimistic that Stuart had been elected that many of Stuart's friends preceded with celebrations of victory. The Republicans, too, were confident that their man had won. Some enthusiastic Republicans in Russell County went so far as to set off a huge explosion of dynamite on Stuart's Rosedale Farm.¹⁰⁶

The next day when all the ballots had finally been counted, C. Bascom Slemph had a little over two hundred more votes than Henry Carter Stuart. Slemph was declared winner with 16,958 votes to 16,731 votes for Stuart.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Willaim G. Smith, interview, Aug. 26, 1969.

¹⁰⁷ Warrock-Richardson Almanack for the Year 1911, 73. Cited in Buni, The Negro in Virginia Politics, 60. Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slemph," gives the difference as 217 votes, with Slemph's Scrapbooks as the source. Pendleton, Political History, 554, states that "the official count gave Slemph a scant majority of 217 votes." Stuart in a later statement referred to "the majority of 217", Bristol Herald-Courier, November 16, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, 66-67.

Stuart immediately cried fraud and refused to concede the election.¹⁰⁸ Stuart's friends urged him to demand a recount, and in answer to their clamor, he issued a statement, which was addressed "To the Democrats of the Ninth District":

According to the face of the returns, Mr. J. Bascom Slep, the Republican nominee, has been elected to Congress from our District by a majority of 217. The definite figures of the result will be known from the State Board of Canvassers, which meets on the 23th day of November at Richmond. The duty of this board is confined to compiling and reporting the figures from the various counties and issuing a certificate accordingly.

It must be recognized as a fundamental principle, that no man can be elected to any office unless he has received the votes of a majority of the legally qualified voters participating in an election.

If I am convinced that Mr. Slep has received such a majority, I would accept cheerfully the figures as reported...It has been brought to my notice, however, on evidence so strong as to demand serious attention, that many illegal votes were cast and counted for Mr. Slep... I must ask a full investigation of this election, with the purpose of arriving at an honest result. Therefore, I shall refer the matter to the Democratic District Committee ...that it may consider such evidence as may be submitted. I shall then hold myself

¹⁰⁸Stuart charged that the Republicans had voted unqualified electors. This, of course, was an unusual charge for Stuart to make. The election machinery was controlled by the Democrats. Out of the 265 precincts in the Ninth District, they all had a Democratic registrar, and Democratic clerks and judges of election. See Hathorn, "Congressional Campaign in the Fighting Ninth: The Contest Between C. Bascom Slep and Henry C. Stuart," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 66(1958), 337-344.

subject to the advice and instructions of this committee, on the question of whether or not to make a formal protest for the seat before the House of Representatives. ¹⁰⁹

Stuart's proposed investigation was never made, quite possibly because he was aware of the fact that he would have to explain some of his own campaign practices. Slemp was declared the winner, although "it cannot be said that Slemp won the victory 'fairly and squarely', but neither can it be said that the Stuart forces were 'fair and square' in defeat."¹¹⁰ The Ninth District silently acknowledged that the outstanding Democrat of Southwestern Virginia had been defeated. "The defeat, though narrow, took some of the heart out of the Democratic Party. Its members and leaders had been too hopeful to rally quickly from the disappointment."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Bristol Herald-Courier, Nov. 16, 1910. Cited in Hathorn, "C. Bascom Slemp," 66-67.

¹¹⁰ Hathorn, 71.

¹¹¹ Glass, Virginia Democracy, 366.

CHAPTER IV

GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA, 1914-1918

Stuart Unopposed in Gubernatorial Election, 1913

Henry Carter Stuart was considered for the governorship of Virginia as early as 1906.¹ He was receptive to the party nomination in 1909, but the primary fight was between William H. Mann of the Machine faction and Henry St. George Tucker of the "anti-Machine" group.² Stuart did not hide his ambition to be the Governor of Virginia. He stated in February, 1910: "I am, and will continue to be in the race for the governorship in 1913."³ Both Democrats and Republicans believed that Stuart had agreed to run for the Ninth District Congressional seat after the Machine leaders promised him that he would be unopposed for the gubernatorial election in 1913.⁴ Needless to say, the "Redeem the Ninth" election put Stuart's name

¹See Chapter III, 58.

²Squires, Through Centuries Three, 566.

³Pendleton, Political History, 545.

⁴See Chapter III, 58-59.

before the public in Virginia. He lost the election by a narrow margin, but he won a state-wide reputation as a politician.⁵ Stuart's defeat in the Congressional election of 1910 made him the Governor of Virginia in 1914.

The primary contest in 1913 saw only one declared Democrat for the Party's nomination, and that was Henry Carter Stuart. Since a primary election was not necessary, Stuart was declared as the Party nominee on August 13, 1913.⁶ A contest between the differing factions of the Democratic Party was prevented by the retirement of all possible candidates in favor of Stuart. "Both factions seemed content to accept him as the Party's candidate. Neither seemed 'itching' for a battle."⁷

The only contest that took place was for the secondary offices. The biggest disagreement was over the nomination for Attorney General. John G. Pollard had declared himself a candidate against Samuel W. Williams, the incumbent.⁸

⁵ Glass, Virginia Democracy, 310. Glass states: "Naturally he did not want to loose the election, but it was to him a relief that he did not have to serve."

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 356.

⁸ Ibid., 355.

The liberals or independents favored Pollard; the Machine favored Williams. There was no evidence of Stuart supporting one candidate over the other. Pollard received the nomination by a small majority. There was a smaller fight between J. Taylor Ellyson and Lewis H. Machen for the nomination for Lieutenant Governor, but Ellyson became the Party nominee. If it had not been for this small area of disagreement and contest, the gubernatorial election of 1913 would have been unparalleled in Virginia history for its lack of importance and political battle.⁹

Stuart was nominated by the Democratic Party without any platform. He made no statement of his own views on public questions, with the exception of the declaration he made when he officially announced his candidacy in January, 1913. At that time he stated:

"I am not the candidate of any clique or faction, but ask the support of all Democrats who stand for good government firmly and resolutely administered in the paramount interest of the State."¹⁰

Stuart did not conduct an extensive or expensive campaign. Between January and June, 1913, he did incur some minor expenses, but after it became evident that

⁹Alvin L. Hall, "The Prohibition Movement in Virginia, 1826-1916," (Master's Thesis, University of Virginia, 1964), 144.

¹⁰Journal of the House of Delegates of the General Assembly, 1914. (Richmond, 1914), House Document IV.

no other Democrat would declare for the nomination, Stuart ceased all open campaigning.¹¹ After he received the official nomination, it was merely a matter of passing the time until the November 3rd election day.

The Democrats were so securely in control of the State that the Republican Party did not even enter the race. By 1910 nomination in a Democratic primary was practically synonymous with election.¹² The Republican Party was so weak that the chances of election of a party member was almost non-existent, and therefore, they felt it useless to even place nominations on the ballot. Such apathy on the part of the Republicans granted the Democratic Party almost exclusive control of the State. Of course, their indifference perpetuated that power.

Thus with no contest within the Democratic Party for the nomination, and with the indifference of the Republican Party, Stuart attained the highest political office in the Commonwealth without any opposition.

Henry Carter Stuart, wealthy farmer and businessman from Russell County, was elected to the governorship of Virginia as no other governor was ever elected. He was

¹¹ William A. Stuart II, interview, Dec. 29, 1969. Henry Carter Stuart reported primary campaign expenses amounting to \$1,296.88. See Journal of the House of Delegates, 1914, House Document III.

¹² Glass, Virginia Democracy, 351.

officially unopposed for both the Democratic primary and the general election on November 4, 1913. The Roanoke-Times reported that it was "the only time in the history of the State when a Governor was chosen by unanimous public consent."¹³ Another editor remarked, "The office was handed to him on a silver platter."¹⁴ True to the predictions made by Republicans and Democrats alike back in 1910 when Stuart ran for the Ninth District Congressional seat, he had no rival for the Democratic nomination. The Republican Party failed to enter the gubernatorial contest. Instead, they concentrated their efforts on the General Assembly. C. Bascom Slep advised his party in this direction, saying that the Republicans would hold the balance of power when the Democrats were divided by factional fights.¹⁵ The election results, however, saw more Democrats elected to the General Assembly than at any time since Reconstruction.¹⁶

¹³ Roanoke Times, July 25, 1913, on the occasion of Stuart's death. Newspaper clipping is located in the Russell County History Notebooks, Russell County Library, Lebanon, Va.

¹⁴ Squires, Through Centuries Three, 573. Neither the name of the newspaper nor the date could be found.

¹⁵ Slep predicted in an interview in August, 1913, that there would be a split in the ranks of the Democrats as a result of "sweeping reforms" that he expected Stuart to make. Glass, Virginia Democracy, 356.

¹⁶ Ibid., 357.

The General Assembly convened on January 14, 1914, with Edwin P. Cox serving as the Speaker of the House, and J. Taylor Ellyson presiding over the State Senate. One of the first orders of business was to report the official election returns and the expenditures of the various candidates of the November 3rd election. Of the 72,421 votes cast for Governor, Stuart received 66, 518.¹⁷ J. Taylor Ellyson was elected Lieutenant Governor, and John Polard won the office of Attorney General. The new State Treasurer was A. W. Harman, Jr., and B. O. James was elected State Secretary. The entire Democratic ticket was elected by large majorities. The general state-wide trend of the election was illustrated by the returns in Stuart's own county, which gave him 1,419 votes out of the 1,650 votes cast.¹⁸

¹⁷Stuart's name was not the only name on the ballot. The other men and the number of votes they received were as follows: C. Campbell - 3,789; B.D. Downey - 2,110; H.C. McDowrie - 1; G.W. Haynes - 1; M. E. Church - 1; and Giles Jackson - 1. These men are presumed to be local candidates. No information was given on their political affiliations. Journal of the Senate of the General Assembly, 1914, (Richmond, 1914), 57.

¹⁸Journal of the House of Delegates, 1914, 63.

In compliance with a 1903 General Assembly act, whose purpose was to "promote pure elections," the candidates were required to make statements of campaign expenditures. The statement included "all sums of money contributed, disbursed, expended or promised."¹⁹ For the primary election, which was held in August, 1913, Stuart declared the following expenses:

Rent of Offices for headquarters during January, February, March, April, May and June	\$445.00
Clerk Hire	364.80
Stationery, multigraphing, publications, etc.	234.14
Postage	162.00
Telegraphs and telephone	41.54
Traveling Expenses	40.40

TOTAL \$1,296.88 20

Stuart declared that he spent "Nothing" in his candidacy for Governor in the general election.²¹ After the expenditures were accepted, "the Speaker of the House declared Henry C. Stuart duly elected Governor of this Commonwealth for the term prescribed by law."²²

¹⁹Ibid., House Document III, 1.

²⁰Ibid., 2.

²¹Ibid., 3. Ellyson spent \$2,229.65; Pollard spent \$4,564.71; Harman spent \$26.00; and James spent "Not a cent," for the general election.

²²Journal of the Senate of the General Assembly, 1914, 57.

The Stuart Administration, 1914-1918

Henry Carter Stuart was inaugurated on February 2, 1914. His Inaugural Address, which was delivered at the Capitol in Richmond, outlined the basic plans for his administration.²³ His speech began thus:

"I enter upon the duties of the governorship with a deep sense of the generous consideration of my fellow-citizens. Called to the office by the unanimous voice of my own party, and without serious opposition from any source, I feel that, coupled with the honor, there is the fullest measure of obligation and responsibility."

The announcement of my candidacy contained this declaration: "I am not the candidate of any clique or faction, but ask the support of all Democrats who stand for good government firmly and resolutely administered in the paramount interest of the State." Having now taken the oath of office, I promise that my course as Governor shall be controlled by the principle thus announced, and that in that spirit my strength and energy shall be steadily and earnestly devoted to the service of the State.

Nominated and elected without a platform having been promulgated by my party, and without any statement of my own views with respect to public questions, it now seems my duty to interpret as best I may the sentiment of which

²³For the full text of Stuart's Inaugural Address, see Journal of the House of Delegates, 1914, House Document IV.

my election is the substantial expression, by some definite reference to the work which lies before us. So far as my participation in the work is concerned, I wish to say at the outset that I rely with confidence upon the other officials of the Executive Department, and particularly upon the wise and active co-operation of the General Assembly, to whose committees and members I shall frequently turn for consultation and advice.²⁴

The new Governor went on to say that the "functions of government are misapplied unless there is produced approximate equality in the distribution of burdens and benefits."²⁵ This was his introduction to a discussion of the tax system, which he considered to be "confessedly and glaringly defective."²⁶ He pointed out that although the present rate of taxation on all classes of property was equal and uniform, discriminations existed from the non-assessment, under-assessment, or over-assessment of property. Governor Stuart advocated tax reform that would broaden the base of taxation so that the "common burden may rest lightly on all."²⁷ He tentatively suggested local boards of equalization in counties and cities to work with a State board of equalization. He proposed that

²⁴Ibid., 1.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., 2.

²⁷Ibid.

there was a need for legislation that would provide for "segregation of the subjects of taxation. Segregation is the only alternative..."²⁸

Governor Stuart planned a "progressive policy" of administration. He enumerated several other matters that he hoped to deal with as Governor. He proposed the passage of legislation that would provide a uniform system of accounting and require itemized statements of all receipts and disbursement of public funds. He believed that the business of government should be conducted by the methods used by any prudent and experienced businessman. A law that guaranteed the "absolute purity" of all elections was suggested. He also discussed the enactment of safeguards for the primary plan of candidate nominations.

The new Governor turned to education and stated that "our system of education should continue to have watchful care and generous support."²⁹ In keeping with his own farming background and interests, he proposed the advancement of agricultural knowledge and training. He favored an increase in the activities of the pure-food department. Governor Stuart conceded that better public

²⁸ Ibid., 4.

²⁹ Ibid., 5.

highways would be of enormous help to the State, but he warned of "raising money for road purposes by the sale of bonds."³⁰ He declared his support of a requirement concerning the registration of lawyers and others employed in the enactment of legislation.

In regard to labor, Governor Stuart stated that he favored legislation that would limit the employment of children under fourteen years of age in mines, factories, and mercantile establishments. He likewise advocated a fair and reasonable workmen's compensation.

The new Governor concluded his Inaugural Address by saying:

"I count myself fortunate in being given the opportunity to engage in the public service at a time when there is a growing clearness of vision as to the mission of popular government, and a growing determination that the real purpose for which it is established shall be resolutely held in view and executed. ...those of us charged with official responsibility should bend our efforts toward placing this State in the position of progressive leadership and activity which is rightfully hers."³¹

It was without debate that the new Governor was aware of his responsibilities as the Commonwealth's Chief Executive. He fully acknowledged his obligation to give Virginia progressive leadership. But Governor

³⁰ Ibid., 6.

³¹ Ibid. Governor Stuart's Inaugural Address failed to refer to Prohibition, which was one of the leading State issues at that time.

Stuart went on to point out, in regard to his own active participation in the government of the State, that he intended to "rely with confidence upon the other officials of the Executive Department, and particularly upon the...General Assembly."

Stuart's administrative record confirmed his statement. Rather than having four years of dynamic and progressive leadership, as was expected of Stuart, and reform, as predicted by C. Bascom Slemp, the State government between the years 1914 and 1918 was quite passive. Save for the issue of prohibition in 1914, and the limited discussion of tax reform in 1915, the Stuart administration went down in the annals of Virginia history as an insignificant, even stagnant period of State politics.

The records of the General Assembly during Stuart's term of Governor showed an indiscriminately large number of bills that became laws with little or no debate. The laws contained relatively unimportant issues of local interest to separate counties and cities. Since Stuart's term marked a period of peace among the factions of the Democratic Party, C. Bascom Slemp's prediction of "spilts" in the Party ranks in the General Assembly never developed. Governor Stuart did not instigate any radical reform measures. Instead, the policy that he actually followed found public expression in 1918 at the end of his term

when he addressed the General Assembly:

It occurs to me that there is little need for new legislation in Virginia. Quality rather than quantity in the making of statutes is to be sought. ³²

This belief, in short, was the summation of Henry Carter Stuart's entire administration.

Tax Reform, Prohibition, and Other Issues

Stuart's first concern as Governor was his desire to bring about tax reform in Virginia. His first communication to the General Assembly on February 7, 1914, called their attention to the necessity of tax reform, which Governor Stuart defined as being a "long-standing" demand of the people of the State.³³ He announced his readiness to call an extraordinary session of the General Assembly in 1915 for the "sole consideration" of the tax question. Before the General Assembly adjourned on March 20, 1914, a bill was passed and a petition sent to Governor Stuart to the effect that the extraordinary session should be called.

The most important issue in State politics in 1914 was the adoption of state-wide prohibition. By that year the Anti-Saloon League had succeeded in making all but twenty-nine counties and four cities "dry."³⁴ The

³² Journal of the House of Delegates, 1918, 27.

³³ For the full text of Stuart's letter, see Journal of the Senate, 1914, 240-241.

³⁴ Hemphill, Cavalier Commonwealth, 419.

League was determined to take care of the remaining "wet" areas by securing the enactment of a law for state-wide prohibition. The 1914 General Assembly passed an enabling act which placed the question before the people of the Commonwealth.

The Journals of the House of Delegates and the Senate gave no evidence of Governor Stuart either taking a stand on the issue of prohibition or actively participating in or influencing the discussion in the General Assembly. His Inaugural Address made no mention of the issue of prohibition. Governor Stuart, who was a "social drinker when the occasion called for it,"³⁵ reportedly promised that he would get an enabling act passed when he became Governor.³⁶ After the passage of the enabling act, the Reverend James Cannon carried through an intensive campaign to secure a victory at the polls on September 22, 1914. There was no indication of the Governor's support of Cannon. In fact it was felt that Governor Stuart was opposed to Cannon and his activities, and that he believed that prohibition would not be successful in Virginia.³⁷

³⁵Mrs. Harry C. Stuart, interview, September 12, 1969.

³⁶William G. Smith, interview, August 26, 1969. Stuart's promise for an enabling act is unsupported. The 1914 General Assembly Journals report no communication from Governor Stuart asking for an enabling act.

³⁷This opinion of Stuart's views on prohibition and the Reverend James Cannon were expressed in interviews with Mrs. Harry C. Stuart, Sept. 12, 1969, and William G. Smith, August 26, 1969. No objective evidence could be found to support these opinions.

The vote for state-wide prohibition was large in September, 1914. The 1916 session of the General Assembly passed a state-wide prohibition law, called the Mapp Act for its sponsor, Senator G. Walter Mapp, with only a few negative votes. The last saloon in Virginia was closed on November 1, 1916.³⁸

While the majority of Virginians were concerned with the political and social issue of prohibition, Governor Stuart sent a communication dealing with primary elections to the General Assembly on February 21, 1914. He urged the passage of several amendments to the 1905 statute on primary elections. He made a list of suggested revisions so the "people should be convinced that their choice in party contests is duly registered and fairly counted."³⁹ Governor Stuart felt that judges and clerks of elections should be prohibited from using their influence at the polls for or against any candidate. He also urged nominal fees for primary candidates, as well as a nomination paper signed by a "reasonable" number of party members.

From primary elections, the Governor turned his attention to the purity of agricultural seeds and the

³⁸ Hemphill, Cavalier Commonwealth, 419. The most important political and social issue of Stuart's administration evidently reached its height of discussion and debate, and actually became law without the Governor becoming involved.

³⁹ For the complete text of his message, see Journal of the Senate, 1914, 382-383. It is interesting to note that Governor Stuart's proposed election reforms contradicted his own activities in the Congressional election of 1910. See Chapter III of this paper.

manufacture and sale of paints. In a message to the General Assembly on February 25, 1914, Governor Stuart gave his support to two bills "designed to raise the standards of purity and germination of agricultural seeds."⁴⁰ He also pointed out the necessity of effective legislation to regulate the manufacture and sale of paints, spirits of turpentine, and linseed oil. Twenty state already had such laws, and the Governor feared that Virginia would become "a martyr for the unscrupulous manufacturers to dispose of products not sold in other states."⁴¹

Governor Stuart vetoed a bill that would have provided for payment of jurors on March 10, 1914. He objected to the bill on the grounds that "jury service is essentially patriotic in nature and cannot be placed upon a mere pecuniary basis."⁴²

⁴⁰ For the full text of this message, see Journal of the Senate, 1914, 433-434.

⁴¹ Ibid., 434.

⁴² Ibid., 660. A survey of Stuart's record of vetoes showed that he vetoed only a small percentage of bills passed by the General Assembly from 1914 to 1918. Most of the vetoes involved technicalities in wording and they were generally passed in later revised forms. The bills that Stuart vetoed were involved with minor issues, many of them of local character. For example, in 1914, out of 1,024 bills passed by the General Assembly, Stuart vetoed only 10. A similar record is found in the Journals of 1915, 1916, and 1918.

An extraordinary session of the General Assembly was called by Governor Stuart in January, 1915, to consider tax reform. The Governor presented a special message on January 13, 1915, and therein announced the reforms that he deemed necessary.⁴³ He advanced the principle of segregation of certain classes of property to be taxed for State purposes. The General Assembly enacted several changes in the tax system that segregated "intangibles" and rolling stock and other such subjects to State tax purposes and released real estate to the local governments for taxes. "It was found necessary to retain what it was hoped would be a temporary tax of 10% on \$100 of assessed valuation to assure sufficient State revenues."⁴⁴

Aside from tax reform and prohibition, an inspection of the Journals of the General Assembly revealed four years of unimportant legislation dealing with local county and city matters. Further study indicated that Governor Stuart played a relatively minor role in the legislative affairs. Contrary to the opinion that "he kept in close touch at all times with pending and proposed legislation and was almost always successful in the use of his influence in law making," the Journals

⁴³ See Journal of the Senate, 1915, 6-11, for the complete text of Stuart's message.

⁴⁴ Glass, Virginia Democracy, 310. Some amendments were made in 1916 to the tax reforms initiated in 1915, but the system was upset by World War I, and it appeared as if the segregation policy was entirely abandoned. It was later enacted in similar form under the administration of Harry F. Byrd, and is still the cornerstone of State finance.

indicated otherwise.⁴⁵ He must be given credit, however, for winning a "complete victory in brief warfare with illegal gambling at the Jamestown race track," as well as succeeding in a "longer fight with an outbreak of hoof and mouth disease."⁴⁶

Governor Stuart represented his State at the first joint conference of the Virginia Commission of Fisheries and the Conservation Commission of Maryland in July, 1916. He met with Governor Emerson C. Harrington on the steamer, "Gov. Robert M. McLane," to discuss fishing rights in the Chesapeake Bay.⁴⁷

The World War in Europe had definite effects on Virginia. There were demands on the industries of the State that resulted in a "boom" in industrial production and growth.

Governor Stuart attended the Democratic National Convention in 1916 as a delegate-at-large. The Virginia delegation solidly backed Wilson. When war was declared in April, 1917, it was necessary for the Governor's Office to become active in the administration of national war-time acts. Governor Stuart found it necessary to work

⁴⁵ Glass, Virginia Democracy, 311.

⁴⁶ Ibid. Also see Journal of the Senate, 1915, 203-204 and 239. During the same year, the United States Supreme Court upheld Virginia's claims that West Virginia should pay part of Virginia's pre-Civil War debt. There is no record of Stuart making an official statement on the issue.

⁴⁷ Journal of the House, 1916, House Document VI.

"far into the night in order to carry through Virginia's part in the prosecution of the war."⁴⁸

While Congress was debating the selective draft bill, Virginia's Governor made a trip to Washington to talk to President Wilson and to protest requiring Virginia boys to be drafted instead of permitting them to volunteer.⁴⁹ Once the selective draft bill became law, "no Governor was more patriotic than Stuart. Virginia was the first state...to report to President Wilson that all the requirements of the draft had been complied with (sic)."⁵⁰

Governor Stuart authorized the organization of the Virginia Volunteers in July, 1917. This body of thirty-one infantry companies was scattered over the State and in Maryland and Pennsylvania in guard duty on the "home front."⁵¹ The Volunteers were called to active service only once, and that was to restore order when a disturbance occurred in Hopewell in 1918.⁵²

⁴⁸ Glass, Virginia Democracy, 311.

⁴⁹ Rixey Smith and Norman Beasley, Carter Glass, A Biography, (New York, 1939), 149-150. Stuart and Wilson were personal friends. Wilson's second wife, Edith Bowling Gart, was a former sweetheart of Stuart. William G. Smith, interview, August 26, 1969.

⁵⁰ Squires, Through Centuries Three, 574.

⁵¹ Kirby, Westmoreland Davis, 106-107.

⁵² Hemphill, Cavalier Commonwealth, 422.

When the General Assembly convened on January 9, 1918, Governor Stuart, in his last speech to the State legislature; discussed the steps that he had taken to prepare Virginia to do her part in World War I.⁵³ The Governor had established a Virginia Council of Defense to work with the National Council. He had also appointed leading citizens to Agricultural and Industrial Councils of Safety. After reporting that Virginia had raised more than her quota in two Liberty Bond drives, Governor Stuart urged the General Assembly to authorize the Governor and Auditor to draw on the State Treasury to meet extraordinary expenses and emergencies that might come up in the war situation. He also urged passage of legislation to protect the civil rights of Virginia soldiers in the military service.

Governor Stuart then turned to discussion of the conditions of the State. On the subject of prohibition, he concluded that it had succeeded beyond the hopes of its proponents and that it was a "wholesome and beneficial reform."⁵⁴ The Governor proposed an amendment to the Mapp Act that would prevent the waste of alcohol seized by law. He suggested that it should be sold to the War Department for the manufacture of munitions for the war.

⁵³For the complete text of Stuart's message, see Journal of the House of Delegates, 1918, 17-22.

⁵⁴Ibid., 21.

On the issue of schools and highways, Governor Stuart reported that they were in "fair condition," but urged "steady advance...as will be fully responsive to the enlightened demands of a virile and progressive citizenship."⁵⁵ He ended his message by saying that the condition of the State was good; public order and prosperity were evident. He assured the people of the Commonwealth that the "business in our State is transacted honestly, without graft."⁵⁶ In view of the upcoming inauguration of Westmoreland Davis, the outgoing Governor advised the General Assembly that there was little need for new legislation in Virginia; perfection of the old was to be desired.⁵⁷

The Stuart Administration ended on February 1, 1918. The newly-elected Governor Westmoreland Davis recommended enactment of an executive budget, the establishment of a centralized State purchasing commission, the passage of a war-time anti-trust law, and other economic and efficient measures that hinted of a progressive four years that would be in direct contrast to the passive administration of Henry Carter Stuart.

⁵⁵Ibid., 22. The last act to which Stuart attached his signature created the State Highway Commission. Squires, Through Centuries Three, 575.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

CHAPTER V
THE LAST YEARS

Henry Carter Stuart was immediately called to Washinton to serve as one of the "dollar-a-year" men for President Woodrow Wilson. He was appointed to the Price-Fixing Commission of the War Industries Board, and he served as Chairman of its Agricultural Committee until after the Armistice in November, 1918.¹ He was also appointed in 1918 to a special commission to investigate large packers. When President Wilson held the President's National Industrial Conference in December, 1919, Stuart was a member.² His background as a farmer and businessman had given Stuart the necessary credentials for these federal appointments.

Stuart's record of service as a business advisor to the Wilson Administration was awarded by an appointment to the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1920. He declined the appointment, however, because he felt that the work would take most of his time. The ex-Governor wanted to

¹Glass, Virginia Democracy, 311. This committee was concerned with the correlation of productive food-stuffs and the mobilization of agriculture for the war effort.

²The National Industrial Conference was instructed to report to Congress the necessary measures for the restoration of industry to a peace-time basis.

return to his own business and farms in Southwestern Virginia. He was tired of public service.³

While Stuart had been in the Governor's Mansion in Richmond, his home in Elk Garden was closed. The operation of his farm was directed by his brother, Dale Stuart, and his nephew, Harry C. Stuart. Before returning to his home in 1922, Stuart renovated the house and asked his nephew and his wife to live with him.⁴

The retired politician remained active, however, after he left Richmond and Washington. State Democratic Party leaders consulted him concerning appointments and candidates. He served as President of the Virginia Farm Bureau in the early years of the 1920's. It was while at the head of the Farm Bureau that Stuart became identified with the rising Harry F. Byrd organization.⁵

During Byrd's administration in 1924-28, there was a significant amount of agitation in the State over the issue of borrowing money by bonds to build highways. Byrd did not want to incur a large debt. In order to defeat a bond movement, Byrd formulated a Pay-as-You-Go Association, and

³William A. Stuart II, interview, Dec. 29, 1969.

⁴Stuart's wife died in 1920, and his daughter moved to California. His nephew, Harry C. Stuart, became the general farm manager of Stuart Land and Cattle Company, and his wife served as the Governor's hostess until his death in 1933.

⁵Kirby, Westmoreland Davis, 160-161.

asked Stuart to serve as its President. Since Stuart held similar beliefs on the bond issue, Byrd felt that Stuart's political name would give the association strength.⁶

Stuart spent several months out of each year traveling abroad during his last years. The stock market crash, however, forced him to stay in Russell County and take care of his business and farms after 1929. Stuart was frequently ill after 1930, and he required the year-round residence of a nurse in his Elk Garden home.⁷

At the time of his retirement, Stuart was recognized for his leadership in State politics with honorary membership in Phi Beta Kappa. He was also awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws Degree at the University of Virginia.⁸

Henry Carter Stuart died on July 25, 1933, at three o'clock in the afternoon in his home in Elk Garden. He was seventy-eight years old. The cause of death was believed to be a stroke. For two weeks prior to his death, he had been in bed, loosing and regaining consciousness several times. He had been an active man all his life,

⁶William A. Stuart II, interview, Dec. 29, 1969.

⁷Mrs. Harry C. Stuart, interview, Sept. 12, 1969. Stuart's nurse was Emily Northcross of Richmond.

⁸Ibid. Also, Roanoke Times, July 26, 1933. The newspaper clipping of Stuart's obituary is in the Russell County History Notebooks, Russell County Library, Lebanon, Va.

and even at that time, he scorned his illness by telling his family: " I do not want the word to go out that I am on my deathbed."⁹

Death came, however, while he slept. The funeral was conducted in his Elk Garden home, and his body was taken to Abingdon for burial. Stuart had requested that he be buried in Russell County, and in 1940, his nephew, Harry Stuart, had the remains moved back to Lebanon when the cemetery was completed.¹⁰ Stuart's tombstone bears only the following inscription:

HENRY CARTER STUART
1855-1933
Governor of Virginia
1914-1918

⁹Mrs. Harry C. Stuart, interview, Sept. 12, 1969.

¹⁰Ibid.

IN RETROSPECT

C. Bascom Slemp, the noted politician and Congressman from Virginia's Ninth Congressional District, once made the following observation:

"One cannot see, touch, or hear a political tide, but it can be felt. The man in public life who fails to create a tide or sense an adverse tide will soon be politically lost."¹

Slemp's statement aptly catches the significance of the man called Henry Carter Stuart, a prominent farmer and businessman, a politician, and Governor of Virginia from 1914 to 1918.

Stuart was first and foremost a farmer in Southwestern Virginia. His wealth and social prominence, however, made him a leading politician in the Ninth District and on the State level. He had descended from a long line of men distinguished for their service to Virginia, and true to his inheritance, Stuart accepted public service as a noblesse oblige. He was narrowly defeated in the Ninth District Congressional race of 1910. But in 1913 he was elected to the governorship of Virginia as no other man

¹C. Bascom Slemp, The Mind of the President, (New York, 1926), 8.

had ever been elected. Stuart was officially unopposed in both the Democratic primary and the general elections.

Although Henry Carter Stuart reached the zenith of State public service, his term as Governor went down in the annals of Virginia history as an insignificant, even stagnant period of State politics. With the qualified exception of prohibition and limited tax reform, Stuart's administration did not bring about any important changes in Virginia. He failed "to create a tide," and as a result, he has become, not only "politically lost," but "historically lost" as well.

Outside of his own Southwestern Virginia, few people recognize the name, Henry Carter Stuart. Virginia history gives him no more than mere mention, and historians pass over him as if he were a nonentity.

A study of his career indicates, however, that he has not been unfairly accorded the position of relative unimportance. By virtue of his own action, or lack of action as the case may be, Henry Carter Stuart failed to qualify himself for a notable place in Virginia history.

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valuable information, but also
considerable insight into the
personality of Henry C. Stuart.

Mr. William G. Smith, Rosedale, Va., August 26, 1969.
Distant relative and former employee (book-
keeper and chauffeur).

Mrs. Harry C. Stuart, Elk Garden, Va., Sept. 12, 1969.
Niece who presently lives in Henry C.
Stuart's home.

Mr. William A. Stuart II, Abingdon, Va., Dec. 29, 1969.
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